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African Violet MAGAZINE

July • August 2005 Volume 58 Number 4

AVSA Information

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ARTICLES BY MEMBERS, COLUMNISTS AND MEMORIALS: Send to Editor.

Please Note: Deadlines - Articles and Columnists: Jan. issue - Oct. 1; Mar. issue - Dec. 1; May issue - Feb. 1; July issue - Apr 1; Sept. issue - June 1; Nov. issue - Aug. 1.

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QUESTIONS ON HYBRIDIZING: Dr. Jeff Smith, "In Search of New Violets" The Indiana Academy, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306. Web site: avsa.org

RESEARCH: Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304.

SHOW ENTRY TAGS: 100 - $8.00 postpaid. Order from AVSA Office.

SHOW SCHEDULE APPROVER: For information on Shows, AVSA Awards and Approving Schedules write to: Meredith Hall, P. O. Box 370, Marlin, TX 76661. *E-mail* MHALL@worldissue.com. **Do not send Show Schedules by E-mail - this address is for information ONLY.**

TALLY TIME: Heather Menzel, 135 N. Main St., Yardley, PA 19067. *E-mail* hmenzel@erols.com

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$49 - 2 Years $73 - 3 Years

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African Violet MAGAZINE

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July • August JUL 0 6 2005 Volume 58 Number 4

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COVER

Rob's Fuzzy Navel
Best in Show
Best Semiminiature
From Best Robinson Collection
2005 AVSA National Show
Exhibited by: **Kathy Lahti**
Hybridized by: **R. Robinson**

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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The African Violet Society of America, Inc. — Org. 1946

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.

President's Message

Dear AVSA Members,

It is a true honor for me to greet you as your new President. I hope that I can continue with the great tradition that has been established by those who have gone before me. I know that I have big shoes to fill. Janet Riemer is to be commended for the fine job she did as President for the last two years. I encourage your input and ideas for the betterment of the Society.

The Cincinnati convention is just a memory now, and what a memory it is. The Ohio State African Violet Society should be very proud of the job they did. The show was outstanding with over 900 entries and has given Minneapolis a goal of 1,000 entries for the 2006 convention. The food was excellent, and the hotel was unique. It was wonderful to see all of the familiar faces and to have so many first time attendees. The weather gave everyone a true picture of a Midwest spring, with mid eighties for the first part of the week and snow by the weekend. The auction was another record-breaker with over $7,000 earned for AVSA. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make the convention a success and to all who donated items for the auction.

I want to thank the retiring members of the Board, Byron Borck, David Buttram, Jan Davidson, Kathy Lahti, and Harry Weber for their service and welcome our new Board members, Linda Abplanalp, John Carter, Randy Deutsch, Blanca Fuster, and Andrea Worrell. Also, thanks to Gary Gordon for his years as Treasurer and welcome to Sue Ramser as our new Treasurer and Linda Golubski as our new Third Vice President.

Several committee chairmen have retired from their positions this year and I wish to thank them for their many years of service, in addition to announcing their replacements. Elinor Skelton served well for many years as Resolutions Committee Chairman, and her assistant, Mary Boland, will now assume that position. Kent Stork served well as Commercial Activities Chairman and Lynn Lombard will now take over his duties. Anne Nicholas has given the duties of Library Committee Chairman to Tom Glembocki. Carolee Carter, former Membership and Promotions Chairman, has assumed the duties of Vice Chairman of the Membership and Promotions Committee while her former Vice Chairman Annie Reick will now become the Chairman. Harry Weber has passed on the task of Ways and Means Committee Chairman to Janet Castiglione. Thank you to everyone who has worked so hard for AVSA and to all of you who agreed to take on the new responsibilities. Without volunteers our organization would not continue.

I hope that you like the new look to the magazine and enjoy the increased amount of color pages. This will enable our members to see even more exquisitely grown African violets, as well as color photos accompanying informative articles.

Another bit of exciting news was received by Joyce Stork after the convention. The beginner's book "Anyone Can Grow African Violets" was accepted for publication by University of Nebraska Press, and hopefully will be available by next year's convention, or maybe sooner. Joyce has worked very hard on this book, with the help of Barbara Pershing, and it is very gratifying to see their work come to fruition. Make plans now to add this to your club library.

We were all distressed to learn of the fire at Holtkamp's greenhouse. This happened shortly after convention and did quite a bit of damage to one section of their greenhouses. It mainly damaged the area where they had leaves, babies, and starter trays. The structure itself was spared. I don't know how this may affect their supply of plants, but I'm sure that they will work diligently to recover. Our best wishes are with them.

Have a great summer.

Linda

Linda Owens
President, AVSA

Editor's Notes

Ruth Rumsey
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In this issue you will find many more color pages. These additional pages will allow more color photos of award-winning plants, as well as color illustrations for informative articles.

Please let me know what you think. Our AVSA Photographer, **Winston Goretsky,** outdid himself this year. The color photographs are spectacular. On the cover of this issue is the 2005 Best in Show, 'Rob's Fuzzy Navel', grown by **Kathy Lahti** of Minnesota.

With the additional color, I would like to have a page or two of photos, submitted by our members, of their own plants. I would prefer slides, for color accuracy. However, if you would prefer to submit digital photos or color prints of your own plants, I will accept these also, but will include a disclaimer, as color accuracy cannot be guaranteed without a slide.

PLEASE DO NOT email digital photos to me. To maintain the quality for publishing them in the AVM, they must be saved **AT LEAST 300dpi.** Files this size could take a while to download, and will be deleted. Please save the digital photos to a CD and send them to me.

All photos for inclusion in the AVM must be of the plant **ONLY** - no ribbons, no other plants, no name cards, etc. Please include the name of the plant and the grower.

I know that many of you have growing tips to share with our other members. Please send them to me. Something you stumble upon could be a tremendous help to someone else.

Many of you have been experiencing trouble with the First Class Database Update. Please look on page 22 for the solution to this problem.

We have a new advertiser in this issue. **LED Grow Lights** ad appears on page 61. These lights are a new innovation for African violet growers. Please check out their web site www.ledgrowlights.com or give them a call (877) LED-GROW to learn more.

In this issue, please turn to page 32 to read **Jim Toms's** fine article, "How the Ill-prepared Prepare for Show". Jim was kind enough to share the article and photographs that appeared in the ***Newsletter* of the Lakeshore AVS of Toronto**, of which he is the Editor.

My friend, **Bob Clark**, tells about "Underwater Flower Arrangements" on page 16, illustrated with color photographs of designs by **Karen Cichocki** and **Ivy Sayer**.

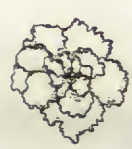
On pages 52 and 53, see the top three designs from the 2005 AVSA National Show. **Olive Ma Robinson** won Best Design in Show, with "Go Bengals".

A listing of all the **AVSA 2005 National Show Winners** can be found on page 8.

One of the highlights for Jenny and I at each convention is the Luncheon Auction. This gathering has grown tremendously in the last few years. AVSA members donate African violet related items and the bidding can get pretty exciting.

I bid on a gorgeous quilt made by **Jo Kirby** of North Dakota. My good friend, **Pat Wilson**, former First Lady of AVSA, outbid me, which I regretted in a minute. I wanted the quilt for yet-to-be-born granddaughter, **Kasey Loraine Ohman**, due to join the family two weeks after the convention. I approached Pat and offered to buy it from her for more than her final bid, and after considering it for less than a second, she said, "We grandmothers have to stick together!" Pat graciously let me have it for the winning bid.

Once again, another example of how generous and kind African violet folks are!



Office Update

Jenny Daugereau
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Email: avsa@earthlink.net

Another great convention has come and gone. If you missed it, rent the DVD or CD that will be available in August through the AVSA Library to see the show. We all had a great time. The plants were outstanding and of course my favorites, the terrariums, were just great. Thanks to all the people of Ohio and Kentucky for the great convention.

Ruth and I were able to go on one of the tours offered by AVSA, a cruise down the Ohio River on a paddle boat. We had the best time. Great friends, good food, and you should have seen the AVSA members up dancing to the oldies. Elmer Godeny lead the group in line dancing, Laurel and Winston Goretsky waltzed around the dance floor like old pro's, and Fred Packer, Ruth, and I twisted the night away. Gertrude Schneider showed us all a thing or two and Bill Price was the star of the show with his modern style dance. Jim Owens started the dancing off with Kathy Bell and the rest of us just joined right in. Even with the rain it was a lot of fun. Next year, make sure you register for convention, you never know what you might be missing.

If you call the office you might notice a warm, familiar voice. Amy Sanders is back as our office secretary! We are all so happy to have her back. She is a great asset to the AVSA office. If you call, be sure to welcome Amy. She had been sorely missed.

If you are having problems updating your First Class 2, please go to FirstClass2.com and then to "support". Follow the directions for downloading and running the fix. This will allow you to update as usual. You do not have to do this every time, just this once. If you still have problems, let me know.

Growing in Natural Light

by Sue Hodges

While many growers have artificial lighting for their plants, African violets and other gesneriads are quite happy with natural light. After all, this is the way they are grown in the wild!

Probably the largest benefit of artificial light is that there are no cloudy days; the light is consistent and able to be controlled. With natural light, growth will probably be slower and plants will take longer to bloom than under artificial light. African violets can take some early morning or late afternoon sun, but midday sunlight needs to be filtered with a curtain or something similar. During winter, the sun is lower in the sky and often comes into rooms more than in summer, and it is still strong enough to burn unprotected plants.

A south or southeast window is probably the best aspect with the plant being within about one foot of a window. Trees, eaves, and awnings will all have a bearing on how much light enters your room. Of course, skylights allow lots of light into rooms so conditions will vary from room to room.

Pots with water wells are attractive for growing on windowsills, and they allow you to fertilize your plants as you water. Turn your plants a quarter turn every few days so that they develop evenly. If you do not turn your plant, it will grow towards the light source and will develop a lean to one side. Turning the plants also encourages buds to develop evenly around the plant.

If you grow a number of plants at a window, you may like to rotate the positions so that the plants all get an even share of the light. Sometimes plants can be placed on containers to raise them above those that are closer to the light. Some people even suspend plants from a rail above the window as you would hanging baskets.

Try moving your plants around until you find a position where they are happy and bloom well. Give them as much light as you can, short of hot, midday sun, and they will reward you with lots of bloom.

From *African Violet News*,
Official Journal of the AVS of NSW, Australia

Question Box

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Hello, violet friends. I hope you and your violets are enjoying the summer so far. I want to thank readers who communicate follow-up comments to me regarding questions and answers that appear in this column. We have so much to learn from each other. My March-April column contained a Q-and-A regarding how long violets might be expected to grow well and bloom.

Dr. Julie Adams of Vanderbilt University wrote that she was able to save about 15 violets which had belonged to her grandmother. "I know that the 10 violets I have left are at least 15 years old. I also know that one of them is at least 22 years old. This violet is Optimara 'Paris' (it has the original identifier stick, and she had labeled it "Optimara Paris – original plant") and she had it when I went to Europe (including Paris) the first time as a high school student. Some of these violets could be even older than the one I mentioned above. My grandmother had violets from my very first memory, and I will soon be 38. I fell into ownership of these plants because I was the one person in the family who would take them on, knowing how much they meant to my grandmother and hoping that my grandmother would one day be able to have them back. I suppose it was all the time I had spent with her taking care of the plants when I went to visit her as a child. It was considered a "treat" to be able to water the violets."

I think this is such a wonderful story, and I thank Dr. Adams for allowing me to share it with you. (By the way, I accidentally found an article in the July-August 1993 *AVM*, "Violets that just keep on going, and going, and going ..." by Kent and Joyce Stork, that is the final word on just how long a violet can flourish.)

[**ED note:** The current MVL has 'Optimara Paris' as registered in 1995. Perhaps the plant in question was an earlier iteration of the name, or an unregistered version. In any case, it's still a great story!]

On another question from my last column, "how to keep your cat from bothering your plants", Barbara Pershing recommends the product called Bitter Apple. One spray of this stuff on the leaves of her streps discouraged her cat, Sam, from chewing on them. "No harm to the cat but he sure did want a drink of water and licked his lips for a while!"

QUESTION: *My mother and I have two problem violets that are quite large. They get the same soil, light, fertilizer, etc., as everyone else ... they just won't lie down! We've tried more light, weighting the leaves, and they just stay straight up. Is there a solution other than starting over?*

Answer: It sounds like you've tried the usual suggestions for getting leaves to behave; still, I would have liked a bit more information. Are these two unruly plants different varieties, or two specimens of the same plant? I ask because not all violets are created equal, so to speak. These two plants might just be inclined to grow in this fashion. Have you ever seen the old hybrid 'Celery'? It was aptly named, as the plant grows upright, like a celery plant. Sometimes you see plants in overly crowded conditions exhibiting a growth pattern wherein the leaves grow straight up, competing for light. I have heard – and this may be an old wives' tale – that, once a plant begins to grow in this manner, it will persist, no matter what you do to it. You didn't state whether you grow under lights or in natural light. You gave these plants more light, but have you tried a different kind of light? Have you taken leaf cuttings to see if the offspring show the same trait? I wish I had a real answer to your dilemma. With my own plants, when one of them isn't growing well, I'll start changing some aspect of its culture, one thing at a time, to see if it will respond with better growth. I hope you will keep me updated as to your progress.

QUESTION: *The fertilizer that I use in my wicking reservoirs turns the water blue, and this makes it easy for me to tell when the water is low. I would like to rotate fertilizers, but, with the others, it's difficult to tell when the level is low. My question is: would it be harmful to add vegetable food coloring to the water when fertilizing with colorless fertilizers?*

Answer: As someone who has more than once allowed wicking reservoirs to dry out, I can certainly relate to your concerns. As far as I know, there should be no harm to your plants from a fertilizer solution with a small amount of food coloring in it.

QUESTION: *I've always wondered how the judges choose the Best in Show plant. Do they have favorite varieties which they tend to pick?*

Answer: Selecting the best plant is probably the most important part of judging a violet show, and it is often, but not always, the most difficult. Sometimes, as the judges are working the show, they notice a particular plant that just leaps out as "Best". But in the case of a large show, where a number of exhibitors have entered high-quality plants, the decisions can be laborious and time-consuming. The choice of Best in Show is the last step in Horticulture Division judging and is a decision in which all the judges are involved. Plants to be considered are those that have already been judged Best in Class or are high-scoring plants from the collection classes. Once the judges are able to concentrate on these plants, they can begin the process of elimination. Ideally, they can have the clerks move the finalists to an area where they can be placed side by side so they can be easily compared. Finally, the choice of best plant (and second and third best, if these awards are being given) is arrived at by the agreement of the judges. As a lapsed student judge from years ago, I remember that judges are enjoined to "look for beauty, not for flaws." To be the winner of a Best in Show award is a very special experience. Good luck!

QUESTION: *My friends kid me that I'm growing an "African violet bonsai" because my plant has such a long neck. I know I'm supposed to cut the top off and re-root it, but when I tried that with another plant it didn't work and the top part rotted. I don't want that to happen with this plant, so I wonder if there's some other method I could try.*

Answer: I can understand that you would be reluctant to risk losing another plant, given your previous experience with topping and re-rooting. There is a well-established propagation technique called "air-layering" that might be applicable in this situation. You can leave the plant in its pot, scrape the neck slightly, and dust with a rooting compound, if you use it. Now, wrap damp sphagnum moss (the long fiber variety) around the scraped portion of the neck. Wrap the ball of moss with clear plastic, being sure that it fits the neck tightly. With florists' tape, twist-ties, or string, fasten the plastic at both top and bottom to keep the sphagnum moss from drying out. In order to have room for this operation, you might have to remove a few leaves from the plant. Return the plant to your collection and treat it as you do your other plants. Check every week or so to see if the moss is still moist. If it seems to be getting dry, add some water to it. In a few weeks, you will be able to see new roots forming. When the roots seem to be well-established, remove the plastic but leave the moss in place. Cut the stem off just below the new roots, pot the plant (with the moss) in its own container surrounding the sphagnum with your usual potting soil. The roots should soon travel into your soil.

QUESTION: *Recently I started growing a nice plant of Saintpaulia orbicularis. I wicked it and put it on the light stand with my other violets but noticed after a few weeks that it had developed yellow spots on the leaves. I'm sure it's not bugs – I know what the usual violet bugs look like. I wonder what could be wrong. I grow several other species violets – grandifolia and pendula – and they do fine for me. I hope you can help.*

Answer: I suspect that, by now, you've checked *S. orbicularis* in one reference source or other. It's a species native to shady areas which exhibit a wide daily temperature variation, from 90-degree highs to 40-degree lows. The leaves are round and thin – much thinner than those of most of the hybrids – fairly small and pale green. The tiny flowers are very pale blue to almost white. Most of the sources call it "hardy", but I think you need to make an effort to duplicate, at least to some extent, the conditions to which it is native. It grew best for me on an east windowsill. It seemed to be in bloom constantly, but then I came home one day to find that it had collapsed. My first recommendation would be to change the light source. Put it in natural light. Check to see if the new growth comes in looking healthier and unspotted. I would like any *AVM* readers who have been able to keep *S. orbicularis* going for any length of time to get in touch with me, as I would like to share your tips for success with this plant.

QUESTION: *Earlier this year I noticed a sort of fuzzy-looking white crust on the surface of the soil in some of my violets. I'd never seen this before. It hasn't seemed to bother the plants, but I wonder what it could be.*

Answer: Your description sounds like the fuzzy white stuff might be a layer of fungal growth, perhaps brought about by spores in some component of your soil mix. I know that I have found what looks like fungus in bagged soil or compost mixes, especially those containing wood products. Some trees contribute microrrhizal fungus to soil, which is actually beneficial to some plants. If you used a product that wasn't sufficiently sterilized, these microrrhizae could be present and would grow when conditions were favorable. Supposedly, these fungi are sensitive to nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers, so couldn't co-exist with them. Another possibility is that what you are seeing is a deposit of chemical salts on the surface of the soil – although I'm not sure it would look "fuzzy". In any case, the presence of this white stuff probably denotes a chemical imbalance in the soil mix. If you're pressed for time, I suppose you could scrape off the top layer of soil and replace it with fresh mix, but you really should repot. Get rid of all the old soil and repot in a clean container. Check the bagged mix that you've been using and examine the contents. Can you see anything that looks like rotting wood? Do you see masses that look sort of gray and powdery? Does it smell kind of "funny"? If so, don't use it on any inside plants. At best, you could dig it into an outside flowerbed. I've seen these conditions in a product that I had been using for years. I might just have gotten a bad bag, but it has made me reluctant to buy that brand again.

2005 AVSA National Show Winners

Best African Violet in Show: *Rob's Fuzzy Navel*
Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

Second Best African Violet in Show:
Rob's Fiddle Faddle
Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

Third Best African Violet in Show:
Buckeye Love's Caress
Anne Thomas from Miamisburg, OH

Best AVSA Collection (Standard/Species):
Mary Craig, Buckeye Everlasting, Buckeye Remember Ohio
Anne Thomas from Miamisburg, OH

Second Best AVSA Collection (Standard/Species):
Jean, Nortex's Snowkist Haven, Aca's Wewonchu
Tony Hulleman from Burlington, ON, Canada

Best AVSA Collection (Miniature/Semiminiature):
Lace Shadows, Lakeshore Silver, Symphonette
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Second Best AVSA Collection (Miniature/Semiminiature):
Frosted Denim, Gleeful Elf, Petite Jewel
Susan Hapner from Chesterfield, MO

Best Holtkamp Collection: *Optimara Little Rhodonite, Optimara Little Pearl, Optimara Rose Quartz*
Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

Second Best Holtkamp Collection:
Optimara Molokai, Optimara North Carolina, Rhapsodie Sabrina
Catherine R. Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA

Third Best Holtkamp Collection: *Optimara EverGrace, Optimara EverPraise, Optimara New Mexico*
Tony Hulleman from Burlington, ON, Canada

Best Robinson Collection: *Rob's Fiddle Faddle, Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Rob's Heebie Jeebie*
Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

Second Best Robinson Collection: *Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Rob's Fiddle Faddle*
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Best Buckeye Collection: *Buckeye Daydreamer, Buckeye Electric Dream, Buckeye Love's Caress*
Anne Thomas from Miamisburg, OH

Best Standard: *Buckeye Love's Caress*
Anne Thomas from Miamisburg, OH

Best Miniature: *Rob's Twinkle Pink*
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Best Semiminiature: *Rob's Fuzzy Navel*
Kathy Lahti from Annandale, MN

Best Trailer: *Sunnyvale Trail*
Bill Price from Vancouver, BC, Canada

Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha*
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Second Best Species: *Saintpaulia orbicularis var. purpurea*
Bill Price from Vancouver, BC, Canada

Best Vintage Violet: *Fancy Trail*
Beverly Powers from Richardson, TX

Best Variegated Standard, Best Variegated African Violet: *Buckeye Love's Caress*
Anne Thomas from Miamisburg, OH

Best Variegated Semiminiature: *Lakeshore Silver*
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Best Other Gesneriad: *Kohleria 'Monte's Friendship'*
Dale Martens from Sherrard, IL

Best *Sinningia*: *Sinningia leucotricha*
Paul Kroll from East Aurora, NY

Best *Columnea*: *'Early Bird'*
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Best *Streptocarpus*: *Scented Streptocarpus*
Fern Hildinger from Wagoner, OK

Best Design in Show: *"Go Bengals"*
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Second Best Design in Show:
"The Heart of the City"
Linda Golubski from Blue Springs, MO

Third Best Design in Show:
"Arnoff Center for the Performing Arts"
Mary Jo Bradley from Omaha, NE

Best Small Interpretive Flower Arrangement:
"Shakespeare as You Like It"
Anne M. Nicholas from Denton, TX

Horticulture Sweepstakes: 62 blue ribbons
Beverley Williams from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Runner-Up to Horticulture Sweepstakes:
61 blue ribbons
Catherine R. Thompson from Cedar Falls, IA

Design Sweepstakes: Eight blue ribbons
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Runner-Up to Design Sweepstakes:
Seven blue ribbons
Karyn Cichocki from Lafayette, NJ

Best Commercial Display Table
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Best African Violet on Display Table: *Yvon Decelles*
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Best African Violet in Show (Commercial Specimen): *Lollipalooza*
Kent Stork from Fremont, NE

Second Best African Violet in Show (Commercial Specimen): *Rob's Calypso Beat*
Dr. Ralph Robinson from Naples, NY

Third Best African Violet in Show (Commercial Specimen):
Buckeye Leprechaun Charm (seedling)
Pat Hancock from Middletown, OH

Best AVSA Standard Collection (Commercial):
Smooch Me, Buckeye Concerto, Buckeye Love's Caress
Kent Stork from Fremont, NE

Best AVSA Mini/Semimini Collection (Commercial):
Rob's Hand Puppet, Rob's Calypso Beat, Rob's Boogie Woogie
Dr. Ralph Robinson from Naples, NY

Best Holtkamp Collection (Commercial): *Optimara Chagall, Optimara Hawaii II, Optimara Van Gogh*
Doris Brownlie from Mississauga, ON, Canada

Second Best Holtkamp Collection (Commercial):
Optimara Nebraska II, Optimara Fiji, Rhapsodie Cora
Kent Stork from Fremont, NE

Best Other Gesneriad (Commercial Specimen):
Streptocarpus 'Persian Carpet'
David Thompson from Waterloo, IA

Best New Cultivar (Commercial Table):
Ma's Lily Pad
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Second Best New Cultivar (Commercial):
Buckeye Leprechaun Charm (seedling)
Pat Hancock from Middletown, OH

Third Best New Cultivar (Commercial):
Ma's Moody Monday
Olive Ma Robinson from Naples, NY

Best New Cultivar, Standard African Violet (Commercial class 85):
Buckeye Leprechaun Charm (seedling)
Pat Hancock from Middletown, OH

Best New Cultivar, Semiminiature African Violet (Commercial): *Cupid's Jewel*
Paul Sorano from Dolgeville, NY

Commercial Horticulture Sweepstakes:
37 blue ribbons
David Thompson from Waterloo, IA

Runner-Up to Commercial Horticulture Sweepstakes:
26 blue ribbons
Dr. Ralph Robinson from Naples, NY

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Best Commercial Display Table

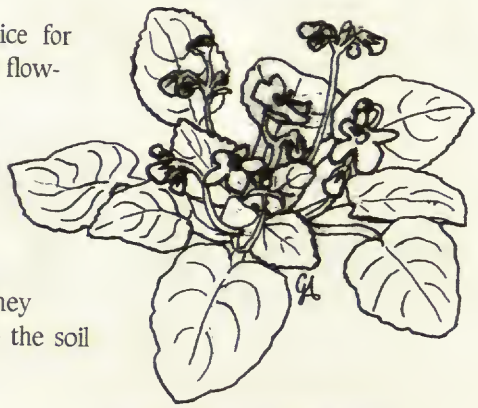
2005 AVSA National Show

The Violet Barn, Naples, NY

Exhibited by: **Olive Ma Robinson**

A Family Portrait

Georgene Albrecht
101 Oak Heights Drive
Oakdale, PA 15071
Email: georgena@verizon.net



Saintpaulia tongwensis

This plant is my number one choice for favorite species. The foliage is lovely, the flowers are a perky blue-violet, and they are plentiful. Mine usually has four or five flowers on a stem. Everyone needs at least one or two species because they are very enchanting plants. It seems to grow best when placed six inches below the very end of the fluorescent light fixture. They appreciate the extra vermiculite added to the soil mix. Remember, they grow in rock crevices so need lots of air movement around the roots. Cape Cod Violetry carries all the species.

I know some of you are asking for more unusual gesneriads, but I must tell you that I have tried some of them and found them extremely hard to grow or have found them too large to grow in my light garden. I sure would love to include your growing experiences in this column; please share your story with us. You may want to also enjoy AGGS membership. Please, see the reciprocal ad in our magazine.

Episcia 'Unpredictable Helen'

This unusual plant is a very pale version of an *Episcia* 'Cleopatra'. At first it seemed almost too pale, but when placed directly six-inches under the center of two grow tubes, it became more vivid. I also had a neat experience recently by placing plants just four inches below two tubes. The pink foliages became rosy and the leaves started to curl upward as if to say "protect me from this". The crème colored variegation started to spoon. When I lifted the light fixtures, they returned to normal depth.

Overfertilization

A grower from California has emailed me about a dilemma involving the use of potting soil that has fertilizer already added. She thinks many growers continue to fertilize with a water soluble fertilizer as usual. They end up with so much fertilizer that it burns the roots and causes so much trouble the plant can't cope.

Be careful to watch for polymer granules in soil mixes, too. They can be a disaster in a wick system because they swell as large as necessary to hold all the water they can reach. These polymers are fabulous in outdoor hanging baskets like *Achimenes, Nematanthus*, and *Aeschynanthus.*

INSV Test Kits

These test kits are not the easiest thing to use, but if you follow the directions carefully and read them through to the end, you will succeed. Keep them cool. The exposure to heat and humidity can deteriorate the test in a short time. Always store them in the refrigerator while you read the directions. You must also select plant tissue that shows ringspot or mosaic mottling on the foliage.

Please note also that there are many different viruses able to invade gesneriads. These kits are virus specific, and your test may read negative. Even though it looks exactly like the virus photos, it may be another virus.

Propagating Virus

After reading research on virus and reading the Cornell diagnosis sheet given to the Long Island African Violet Society, be advised that it is transferred to plants during propagation. When a person says that they did not have thrips but got a virus anyway, they simply got a plant that had been propagated from a virused plant. There is no way to kill a virus in a

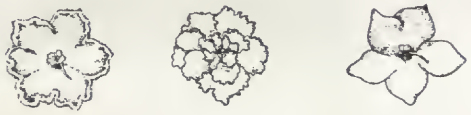
plant. Examine every plant carefully and remember to ISOLATE INDIVIDUALLY.

Please Do Write

I know that we all have a busy lifestyle, but please consider writing a story about your plants, your club, or growing techniques you have developed. Ruth Rumsey does such a great job editing. Please, encourage her by sending some articles her way. They don't have to be long or complicated, just conversational. We will all benefit from your words. When I get my AVM, I just stop whatever I am doing and read it cover-to-cover. We all enjoy human-interest stories, too.

Pep Talk

All this talk of broad mites and viruses does tend to get one down. But, just imagine how awful it would be not to have our beautiful plants to enjoy. And, this family is so prolific in providing us with new and interesting varieties, we can enjoy new things all the time. So, never give up. Just find something new to grow. No other hobby is greater therapy.



Bud Blast

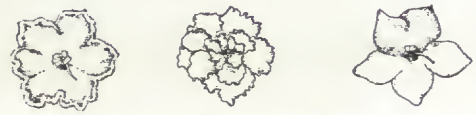
by Joyce Stork

From the AVSA Web Site Frequently Asked Questions

Bud blast can happen for a number of reasons. Fungus disease is one of them. If the plants were left in extremely high humidity (such as closed up in a box), botrytis (or several other diseases) can cause flowers to die, and this would continue down the flower stalk, perhaps even invading the main plant.

It can also be the result of lack of water for long enough that the violets wilted. When the plants are watered, the leaves will respond, but unopened buds generally dry up.

A third cause can be extremely dry air, dry drafts, or heat, in which case the buds lose moisture too quickly to open. Removing all flowers soon after purchase will allow the plants to spend their energy adjusting to your conditions before blooming. Usually the flowers will redevelop quickly. Try to provide the following conditions for them: bright light that is not hot (keep plants near 72 degrees Fahrenheit or 20 degrees Celsius), soil that is slightly moist at all times, but avoid saturated soil, humidity in a range of 40-60%, regular fertilization, and keep the plants in small pots with a potting mix that is extremely porous (we recommend one part spaghnum peat moss, one part vermiculite, and one part perlite).



2006 AVSA CONVENTION

MINNEAPOLIS: City of Lakes

by Ruth Bann

Minneapolis is the largest city in Minnesota and is the commercial, industrial, and culture center for an area extending into neighboring states and reaching as far west as the Rocky Mountains.

Exciting places to visit are the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the Walker Art Galleries, and the American Institute of Swedish Arts, Literature, and Sciences.

If you would like to stretch your legs, you can take advantage of one of the nation's most highly regarded park systems, with its many lakes and walking paths. Lake Calhoun is one of many that come to mind.

A visit to Minnehaha Park will provide the opportunity to explore the first frame house built in Minneapolis west of the Mississippi. Above the Minnehaha Falls, which was made famous in Longfellow's epic poem "The Song of Hiawatha", is located the statue of Hiawatha holding Minnehaha. Feel the presence of the early Sioux Indians as you walk where they once lived so many years ago.

Enjoy the warm weather, the many birds, and the beautiful flowers that grace the city called Minneapolis when you attend the 2006 Convention.

Showcase

Lilian's Sparkler

Exhibited by: **Ray Morrison**
Hybridized by: **E. Champion**
Standard

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Yesterday's Child

Exhibited by: **Morgan Simmons**
Hybridized by: **J. Smith**
Standard Trailer

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Graffiti

Exhibited by: **Catherine R. Thompson**

Hybridized by: **K. Stork**

Standard

Small Talk

Laurel D. Goretsky
32 Scimitar Point N.W.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T3L 2B2
Email: Laurel@Goretsky.ca

"Thank-you" to all the clubs and people involved in making the 59th annual convention and show a big success. The showroom was amazing with around 900 entries. The color of all the different blossoms and plants and the interesting designs were a sight to behold. I had a wonderful time visiting with friends and making new friends, eating and, of course, shopping! I made many trips to the salesroom and back to my room carrying bags and boxes. I'll tell you about my purchases later because I am sure you are eager to hear about how a small but mighty plant won the judges over this year.

In amateur horticulture, Kathy Lahti of Minnesota took home the top prize with 'Rob's Fuzzy Navel'. The plant was a beautiful semi miniature with healthy, shiny green leaves and a mass of peach-pink blossoms. This plant came from the Best Robinson Collection which included 'Rob's Fiddle Faddle' (semidouble rose-pink with dark green pointed leaves) and 'Rob's Heebie Jeebie' (semidouble white/red edge with medium green leaves). 'Rob's Fiddle Faddle' was also the second best in show. As most of you have probably seen before, Kathy's name appears often in the awards list at the convention and at her local club's shows. What you might not have seen is how she brings her plants to convention. Kathy traveled by plane to the Cincinnati convention and brought all her award winning plants on the airplane with her. I had the opportunity to spend time with Kathy at the airport while waiting for flights and saw her modified clear storage container with a flip top lid (made by Rubbermaid®, I think). The box, with a handle added to the top for carrying, stows perfectly under the seat in front. Now, I can't make any more excuses to not enter plants at a convention. Next time that I have a direct flight to a convention, I hope to try the same method for transporting show plants. Kathy is a lovely person to talk to and is very modest about her success. If she can bring award winning plants by airplane, can you imagine what she is capable of accomplishing next year when the convention is hosted in Minnesota?

Kathy's winnings didn't stop with Best in Show and Second Best in Show. As mentioned above, Kathy won the Best Robinson Collection. She also won the Best Holtkamp Collection with the miniatures 'Optimara Little Rhodonite' (single-semidouble pink/darker center with medium green leaves), 'Optimara Little Pearl' (single-semidouble blush-white with medium green heart-shaped-ovate leaves), and 'Optimara Rose Quartz' (single-semidouble pink with medium green ovate leaves).

Our Canadian friends had a good showing with miniatures and semi miniatures. Beverly Williams from Ontario won the Second Best Robinson Collection with the semi miniatures 'Rob's Boogie Woogie' (semidouble medium shell pink pansy with crown variegation of dark green and tan-beige), 'Rob's Fuddy Duddy' (semidouble dark mauve-purple sticktite pansy with dark green quilted leaves), and 'Rob's Fiddle Faddle'. Beverly also received the gold rosette for the Best AVSA Collection (miniature/semi miniature) with 'Lace Shadows' (semidouble white pansy/dark pink fantasy against dark green leaves), 'Lakeshore Silver' (semidouble pink two-tone sticktite pansy with green and white variegated leaves) and 'Symphonette' (single-semidouble lavender two-tone pansy with variegation of dark green, white and pink on the leaves). 'Lakeshore Silver' also won the Best Variegated Semiminiature in Show. Beverly topped off her award success by receiving the Best Miniature with 'Rob's Twinkle Pink'. Another Canadian that garnered a top award was Bill Price from British Columbia. Bill had the Best Trailer in Show with semiminiature 'Sunnyvale Trail' (single blue and purple star/pink fringe against medium green leaves).

Susan Hapner from Missouri, last year's Best in Show winner with 'Persian Prince', rounds off the awards for minis and semiminis. Susan received a purple rosette for the Second Best AVSA Collection (miniature/semiminiature) with 'Gleeful Elf' (double dark blue/white edge with dark green leaves), 'Frosted Denim' (semidouble light blue pansy/white edge

with medium green, quilted leaves) and 'Petite Jewel' (double lavender blue two-tone against variegated leaves).

There was such a variety of well grown minis and semi minis throughout the designated classes that I am glad that I didn't have the pressure of making any of the final judging decisions! All the exhibitors should be proud of their efforts.

I don't want to exclude anyone because all the plants were lovely, but I did have some "honorable" mentions to my eye that I wanted to highlight. First of all, there was a super little plant called 'Planet Kid'. 'Planet Kid' is a miniature hybridized by Hortense Pittman. It has double pale blue blossoms with a white edge and light green, ruffled leaves. I apologize to the exhibitor that I forgot to get their name but they grew a great plant. It really grabbed my attention. Another plant that I thought was grown well was 'Thunder Surprise' exhibited by Anne Nicholas, 'Thunder Surprise' is a semi miniature hybridized by Shirley Sanders. The blossom is a stunning double white star with a blue eye and green edge. 'Indian Trail' was a cute miniature trailer that was exhibited by Fern Hildinger. Finally, I was really taken by a plant called 'Mac's Glacial Grape'. This is a miniature with white and purple thumbprint blossoms. The plant is not listed on the First Class program, but I believe the hybridizer is a man named George McDonald. Again, I apologize to the exhibitor for not recognizing them properly. I promise to do better next time. Please feel free to send me the correct information, and I will include it in the next column.

Some of the tried and true varieties seemed to make a bit of a comeback this year. 'Rob's Fuzzy Navel' has been around for awhile and continues to be a plant that does well at shows. 'Sunnyvail Trail' is almost a vintage violet. 'Rob's Fiddle Faddle' was also popular this year. It is always great to see older varieties still being grown. The only problem sometimes is to find where to purchase or acquire a cutting or plant. This can also be a challenge with brand new hybrids that are not being sold by any commercial growers yet. It is always a good idea to write down the names of the varieties you would like as you tour the showroom, and if you can't purchase them in the salesroom, you can try an online leaf exchange or ask around your local club and other affiliate clubs. If you know the name of the hybridizer of the plant you are trying to find, you could also ask if they know any commercial members who carry their varieties. One thing that I have learned at the conventions that I have attended is that African violet growers are generous people. Most are more than happy to share a leaf off their plant, a whole plant, or to trade one variety for another.

There is so much information to share about the convention that I will save some until next column. I will highlight the commercial winners and share thoughts on the new introductions to watch for.

As I said at the beginning of this column, I did a lot of plant shopping. I picked up the three plants I had on my wish list ('Persian Prince', 'Rob's Squeeze Toy', and 'Rob's Outer Orbit'). Although I bought many more plants than I had planned on, I was better this time at not getting overwhelmed and buying doubles of things already at home. My progress at making my plant collection more manageable is a slower task than I imagined! I guess it's like the tortoise and the hare, "slow but sure wins the race".

Until next time, have a wonderful, safe, and restful summer. Enjoy!

AFFILIATE UPDATE

Bev Promersberger - *Affiliate Committee*
7992 Otis Way, Pensacola, FL 32506
Email: Promers22@hotmail.com

Do you live in Colorado, Florida, or Michigan? There are some growers who want to start new clubs in these states. Check below to see if one of them is near you:

Mile High Violet Society
Brighton, CO
Second Saturday each month, 1:00 p.m.
Contacts:

Trudy Brekel
(303) 452-9015
brekel@earthlink.net

or

Barbara McDaniel
(303) 828-3422
barbmcd8@earthlink.net

Bloomin' Violets & Gesneriads of Palm Beach
Third Saturday each month, 10:00 a.m.
Parkview Villas Clubhouse
2400 Lake Osborne Drive, Lake Worth, FL 33461
Contacts:

Marge Geissler
(561) 747-8705
Mjgeissler39@aol.com

or

Elisabeth Stanley
561-641-0053

High Springs, Florida
Contact:
Joanna Young
P. O. Box 403
High Springs, FL 32655
(386) 497-3764
or
Joanna.Young@actcfl.org

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Contact:
Lenore English
3510 Opal Ave., S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49558
(616) 243-5724 or
tatt3r@sbcglobal.net

UNDERWATER FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

by Bob Clark

Underwater flower arrangements are arrangements that are completely submerged in water, and exhibited in transparent containers.

The purpose of these designs is the same as the other interpretive arrangements; namely, to display our African violet blossoms in an aesthetic and artistic manner. The African violet blossoms should be the center of interest in your design. The blossoms should be supported and accentuated by interesting line and plant material to bring your eye to them. In this category, all plant material should be cut and in excellent condition. A great benefit of working underwater is that your plant material can absorb water through the stems, leaves, and blossoms to remain fresh much longer than in a standard open air arrangement.

Designed by: **Karen Cichocki**

In the interpretive design classes, the interpretation of the title of the class is our aim. This does not mean that the interpretation has to be literal. It could be suggestive, and it could be very obvious. This is your choice. I feel that suggestive is most often the better of the two ways.

In order to execute your design, you must follow the elements and principles of design, as in other design classes. These are listed and explained in great detail in the AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges. Study and understand them, and your design work will go along easily.

To begin your underwater design:

1. Select your container. It should be of clear glass or Plexiglas with no etching or design. Any pattern or design on the glass will be distracting to your design. Some of the ones suitable to use are clear pitchers, brandy snifters, apothecary jars, bowls, some fish bowls, large mugs, and bubble bowls.

2. Select your plant material. Keep in mind that everything you put into your container will be magnified considerably. The thickness of the glass and the shape and curve of the container determines how much it will magnify when the water is added. A round bowl will definitely magnify more than a vertical pitcher or a straight-sided cylinder. Every imperfection will magnify and show, so use precaution.

3. Wash all plant material that you are going to use to be sure all dirt is washed off. Prune out all damaged foliage and other imperfections. Be selective with all the components.

4. Select your African violet blossoms. Choose some buds and freshly opened blooms of varieties that have "substance" and girth. These will hold up better under water and are less likely to deteriorate.

5 Design your arrangement in advance. Try it in your container with water, making adjustments as needed. If it appears too large, either get a larger container or cut down on the design. **Less is best.**

6. If you are using an "old-fashion" bubble bowl, your design will have to be inverted, so be extra sure that all your materials are very secure.

"Mechanics" is a term to describe how the design is held together. Basically, the same mechanics may be used that you use for a standard design, except for the materials that conceal your mechanics. You may use a pin holder anchored with waterproof glue or florists' Sure Stick. You can also use florists' clay anchored in the same way. You can use discreetly covered plastic straws or stirrers to hold stems, which can be anchored down before water is added. Fine wire can be used for support of plant material. Your base or pin holder will need to be camouflaged, or it will be distracting. To cover the pin holder, you can use fine pebbles, tiny stones, shells, clear marbles, glass chips, or other plant material. If using pebbles, make sure to wash them thoroughly. Tiny shells will need to be submerged in water beforehand, to get the air out of them. Nothing is worse than using floating shells. Glue guns or waterproof glue can be used to help construct your design. If using a glue gun, use a "cool temperature" gun, as a "hot temperature" gun can mar and burn plant material. In using glue, however, one must be careful to remove glue "strings," which form after the tip has been touched and drawn away. After the glue has hardened, go back and clean up any glue strings.

Designed by:
Ivy Sayer

The Underwater Arrangement Procedure:

1. You have your container, mechanics, and plant materials all in readiness.
2. Establish your line and anchor it well.
3. Place foliage and blossoms in supportive positions.
4. If you are using a "bubble bowl," anchor the pin holder to the bottom (or cover.) Invert, and add water. In order to remove the large amount of air that accumulates, turn back with the lid up. Gently pry the rubber and "burp," as you would a piece of Tupperware. This forces out a great deal of air, and is more pleasing.
5. If you are using another type of container, insert your finished design into the dry container and anchor it well. Add water slowly, by pouring it down the sides of the container, and not onto the design itself.

Design Reminders:

1. Keep the design simple.
2. Emphasize the line without it being too heavy.
3. Keep everything clear and uncluttered.
4. Color, size, and scale are very important.
5. Do not have any part of your design above the water level.
6. Try not to over-handle the blossoms, thus bruising them.
7. Make sure that the plant material does not touch the sides.

Water Tips:

1. Do not use chemically treated water.
2. Do not use heavily chlorinated water.
3. Do not use warm water.
4. If possible, draw your water a couple of days in advance. Let it stand in an open container.
5. Distilled water is safe to use and preferred.
6. Do not worry about the air bubbles that form on your design; you cannot help it, and no points should be deducted for them. In fact, I find that air bubbles usually enhance a lovely design.

Plant Materials:

1. For line, small woody branches work well. Don't be afraid to prune off a lot of the foliage to emphasize the line.
2. For foliage, try to use small leafed greens, such as boxwood and evergreens. Prune judiciously; remember the magnification factor! Less is best!
3. For blossoms, I stay away from light colors and white, which tend to look washed-out. I like bright colors for underwater, depending on how I interpret the schedule.

In closing, enjoy the art of flower arranging and the challenge of a new experience. Try it!

From *Blossoms*,
publication of the Seattle AVS

PROPAGATING CHIMERAS FROM LEAF CUTTINGS

by Shirley Bellows

Chimeras are among my favorite violets, and I have added several to my collection over the years. Many authorities have maintained that African violets with chimera (pinwheel) blooms will never come true from a leaf cutting - that they must be propagated from a sucker, blossom stalk, or tissue culture, lest the plantlets revert to a solid color. However, after the following experimentation with a few varieties, I have concluded that leaf propagation can produce good results with what I believe to be an acceptable degree of reliability.

My interest in this topic began several years ago when I attended a violet show in Toronto. I was intrigued to see leaves of 'Kiwi Dazzle', a fuchsia and white pinwheel, being offered at the sales table. Upon inquiring, I was informed that the chimera pattern would come true from a leaf. This really surprised me, and I left the show resolved to experiment further.

Once home, I immediately put down a leaf of my own 'Kiwi Dazzle'. Several months later, the three plantlets bloomed - two solid fuchsia and one white with a fuchsia edge. Sorely disappointed and convinced that I had been misinformed, I did not try this experiment again for some time.

One day when I was repotting 'Little Seagull', a white and blue striped semiminiature trailer, I decided, once again, to try leaf propagation. Expecting failure, I was thrilled when the plantlets bloomed; 60% were white and blue pinwheels, and only 40% had solid blue blossoms.

Encouraged, I put down leaves of 'Candy Bells', a white and pink striped miniature violet. The plantlets are blooming now, and about 40% are blooming true with white bells and pink stripes and medium green foliage, and 30% are chimeras but the colors are reversed - the tiny bells are pink with white stripes. Also, the leaves are darker green with red backs and the blossom stalks are red. These results show the importance of knowing what the exact color combination is.

In the future, I will continue to put down leaves of my chimera violets as this propagation method does seem to produce plantlets that come true to variety much of the time.

Reprinted from *Chatter*, The Journal of the
African Violet Society of Canada

In Search of New Violets

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Summertime heat can be very hard on African violets, and many growers fight to keep their collections alive. If heat is a problem in your area, you might consider starting a hybridization project for heat tolerant plants. Potential parents could be cultivars that survive heat the best for your area (check with other growers in your area for suggestions), or you might consider using some of the commercial plants sold in the local chain stores. Most commercial plants are raised in greenhouses where the average temperature runs hotter than a typical home. These plants must have some heat tolerance adaptations or they wouldn't be profitable for the commercial growers. Crossing heat tolerant strains with your favorite cultivars for show or flowers should introduce heat tolerance traits into the offspring. With some inbreeding or back breeding to the heat tolerant parent, new cultivars should be produced with a combination of desirable flowers or growth with heat tolerance. Let the summer heat screen out the best survivors for the next round of breeding. The project will take several generations and a lot of hard work, but other growers in warm areas will be grateful for your efforts.

Q: *Are chimeras more likely to be produced from one kind of violet than others?*

A: Based on my experience and what I've heard from other growers, new chimera plants are a little more likely to show up on fantasy flowered plants than other types. The fantasy trait is unstable and is known to revert to solid flowers frequently. This instability may contribute to the formation of chimera flowered plants. The new chimeras may show up in the babies from leaf cuttings, or as a sport on a bloom stalk. In the later case, the chimera flower can sometimes be "captured" through the use of bloom stalk cuttings. Once the chimera flower has formed a new plant in the axils of the green bracts under the main flower on the bloom stalk, the chimera plant can be propagated in the regular way through suckers or further bloom stalk cuttings.

Q: *Would it be possible to put a raspberry edge on a yellow flower?*

A: I'm not sure if it is possible to get this combination. The raspberry edge trait is linked to the pink/red flower color. These colors are genetic dominants to yellow. However, I have seen pink areas come through on some of the yellow flowered plants so it might be possible to get this combination.

I would suggest crossing a raspberry edge flower plant with the strongest yellow flower plant you can find. The F1 generation will likely be shades of pink/red and I doubt that there will be any visible yellow flowers. About half of the F1 offspring should have a raspberry edge. Take a strong F1 plant and backcross to the yellow flowered parent. This cross should produce about 50% yellow flowered offspring. The raspberry edge trait should also show in 50% of the offspring. The probability of getting the two traits together would be 25%. With luck, some of these offspring will have a good combination of raspberry edge with yellow centers.

I would also recommend that you not throw out the backcross offspring if they don't show yellow flowers in their first bloom. Yellow flower color usually intensifies with the maturity of the plant. If you throw out what appears to be white or pale pink flowers with the raspberry edge you may be losing the plants you really wanted from the cross.

Good luck with hybridizing this combination. Send me a picture if you are successful.

Q: *An article I read recently on a hybridizer described that he often made crosses on the F1 offspring with their first flowers. His argument was that if the plant developed poorly as it matured, he could always throw it out later. Do you think this practice works?*

A: I hadn't thought of hybridizing this way, but I can see where it would have some advantages. Most seedlings are strong enough at first flowering to produce seeds. You shouldn't run a risk of straining and killing the plant when it is this

young just because it is maturing seeds. The hybridizer is right that you could always throw the plant away later if it didn't seem to measure up. The advantage I see in this system is a way to cut down on the time between generations. If you can reasonably evaluate a plant this young and use it as a parent you'd probably save several months getting from one generation to another. When you are combining traits that take two generations to achieve, any method to cut down the generation time would be advantageous. However, I would hope that anyone using this "short-cut" would grow their final product to maturity and reproduce it through cuttings for 3 generations to test stability before naming the plant and releasing it to the public.

Q: *Can African violets be crossed with the yellow woodland violets to help improve their color?*

A: African violets and the woodland violets are not closely related even through the flowers are similar in appearance. African violets belong to the plant family Gesneriaceae and the woodland violets belong to the plant family Violaceae. In order for two plants to hybridize, they must be more closely related. I'm not aware of any successful crosses of African violets with any other genus in the Gesneriaceae family, let alone something more distantly related in a different plant family.

Q: *Wouldn't it be helpful to hybridizers to have pedigree charts for African violets like they have for roses and registered dogs?*

A: Personally, I don't think that anything in the pedigree beyond the immediate parents of a plant would be very helpful. Many of the important African violet traits are genetic dominants and would be visible in the parents, so knowing the grandparents wouldn't be needed. In a few cases, knowing that the grandparent plant showed a recessive trait would let a hybridizer know that the parent carried that recessive. However, with several thousand cultivars available for hybridization, most hybridizers would start with parents who showed the recessive trait rather than try to bring it out as a hidden recessive. Other hybridizers might disagree with me, but I just don't think a pedigree chart would be that useful.

Avoid a Fine, Ship the Fertilizer

Compiled by Lynn Lombard

Some of our 2005 convention goers found it's not just cigarette lighters that are banned on aircraft now – it's African violet fertilizer, too. A word to flyers: ship your fertilizer home; don't try to take it with you, even as checked baggage.

If you surrender your fertilizer when asked, you may still have your name, address, birth date, and Social Security number taken by airport security authorities. Several weeks or months later, you may find in your mail an envelope containing a notice of violation from the Department of Homeland Security, along with a hefty fine. These fines may not be posted, and they can vary wildly from airport to airport.

After an incident at Cincinnati Airport where fertilizer was confiscated, I was asked to research the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) rules to avoid further problems. With the help of Kathy Roubal and Kathy Bell, I confirmed that fertilizers and insecticides fall in two categories of items permitted in NEITHER carry-on nor checked baggage: 1) oxidizers and organic peroxides and 2) poisons. Even though all items in those two groups are not included specifically in the TSA list, officials agreed that a screener might decide a package of fertilizer contains "disabling chemicals and other dangerous items". The www.airsafe.com site specifically gives fertilizers as an example of oxidizers and organic peroxides, along with bleach and swimming pool or spa chemicals.

Pleading ignorance of the rule may not save you. The second paragraph of the TSA document is essential for everyone to know. "If you bring a prohibited item to the checkpoint, you may be criminally and/or civilly prosecuted or, at the least, asked to rid yourself of the item. A screener and/or Law Enforcement Officer will make this determination, depending upon what the item is and the circumstances. This is because bringing a prohibited item to a security checkpoint - even accidentally - is illegal." Another key item from the TSA list is, "In addition, the screener may also determine that an item on the permitted list is dangerous and therefore may not be brought through the security checkpoint." You may find the references below useful to review.

I don't really think any AVSA members "fit the profile" but having to surrender something for which you've paid good money is disappointing, to say the least. The rules regarding permissible items seem to be changing constantly (the current TSA list is dated 3-11-05). Who knows, perhaps some day soil components may be on the list of forbidden items!

Please don't let a wonderful convention week of African violet fun be marred by an unnerving experience with airport security. You can probably make other arrangements through vendors or the hotel to get fertilizer products home.

Thanks go to Kathy Bell (Commercial Sales and Activities Chairman) and Kathy Roubal (USDA Forest Service) for helping assemble and confirm this information.

1. http://www.tsa.gov/public/display?content=0900051980049d28 (US Department of Homeland Security Transportation Security Administration (TSA)) Permitted and Prohibited Items document)
2. http://www.delta.com/travel/plan/baggage_info/special_baggage/dangerous_goods/index.jsp (Delta Airline's list of items prohibited from all Delta flights, including the bleach and poisons categories)
3. http://asi.faa.gov/Docs/HAZMATByPassenger.pdf (US Federal Aviation Administration's "Hazardous Materials Carried by Passengers & Crewmembers", including insecticides)
4. http://www.airsafe.com/danger.htm (Private web site founded by Dr. Todd Curtis, former airline safety analyst with Boeing; site includes more detailed examples of oxidizers and organic peroxides and poisons)

2005 AVSA SPECIAL AWARDS

Recognizing Janet Riemer, Honorary Life Member

AVSA would like to recognize Honorary Life Member, Janet Riemer, with a diamond Honorary Life Membership pin. Janet has honorably served AVSA in many capacities: Director, Secretary, Second and First Vice-President, Archivist, and for the past two years, as the President. She received the first Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership in 1984, a Continuing Service Award in 1987, and her Honorary Life Membership in 1996. The office staff in Beaumont and the membership thank you, Janet, for your many years of dedicated service to AVSA.

Pat Hancock - Bronze Medal

Ohio is the Buckeye state, and that's where the Buckeye African Violets originated - with Pat Hancock, the owner/proprietor of Pat's Patch in Middletown, Ohio. Pat loves "hybridizing for large growing variegated standards with large, unusual blossoms." And she's succeeding. Over 100 Buckeye varieties are listed in the AVSA Master List of Species and Cultivars. This year is the second year Pat has offered a Buckeye Collection class in the national show. She is an Advanced Judge and has written articles for the AVM about hybridizing, care of seedlings, soil additives, and helping affiliates grow.

Dale Martens - Bronze Medal

The "Texas Hot Chili!" - that's how many think of Dale Martens. The moniker will probably stay with her although she moved to Illinois a few years ago. We enjoyed reading Dale's column, "Gesneri-Advice", in the AVM, and learned a lot about caring for new Gesneriads, what to do with tubers, how to promote blossoms, and information about unusual plants from her numerous articles in the magazine and through her programs. Dale is a generous volunteer and donor for the annual AVSA Auction Luncheon, where everyone wants to win one of her new hybrids. The variegated *Streptocarpus* are sought by collectors, and her miniature and scented varieties have been known to generate some large bids. She is striving to find "something different and will try unusual crosses, hoping they will take." We all gain through her curiosity and willingness to share.

Rose Howlett - Hudson Memorial Award

Rose has been growing African violets since the early 60's. She joined AVSA around 1963. She has served on the AVSA Board of Directors, is an AVSA Life Member, a Master Judge, and a Judging School Teacher. She is an active member of the Missouri Valley AV Council and a charter member of the AVS of Greater Tulsa, which formed in 1975. Rose has held many offices, serving as President four times and V.P. four times. She has been a member of the club's Board of Directors since its inception and held most offices at least once. Since Rose wants folks to be aware of club sales, she has been known to call as many as 500 people to remind them of the date. She enjoys giving programs on African violets at nursing homes and garden clubs. The AVS of Greater Tulsa nominated Rose for the Hudson Memorial Award citing her energy, effort, and stamina as a tireless leader.

John Cook - Continuing Service

John and his wife, Barbara, are the owners of Cape Cod Violetry in Falmouth, MA, a company that has been in business for thirty-two years. They carry all the African violet species plants, the original ten varieties, and a vast stock of pots, trays, rings, fertilizers, stationery, and violet knick-knacks. Cape Cod also supports AVSA by advertising in the AVM. Every year, they haul a trailer to the national show and set up their display. If you want it, they usually have it! John has been a Commercial member since 1975. He has been Vice-Chair or Chairman of the Commercial Sales and Exhibits Committee since 1985. He received the One Year Honorary Membership award in 1976 and 1990. We would like to thank John for his many years of service to AVSA.

Kazuo Horikoshi - Continuing Service

Kazuo Horikoshi became a member of AVSA in 1982. He is a Life Member, an Advanced Judge, and he has attended national conventions since 1985. Kazuo received a One Year Honorary Membership in 1992. He is currently serving his second term as an AVSA Director. Each year, Kazuo shares educational print material and photographs from Japan with convention attendees. For the past several years, he has generously donated awards for his hybrids, 'Concord' and 'The Alps', in Amateur Horticulture.

Elinor Skelton - Continuing Service Award

AVSA wishes to recognize Elinor Skelton for her many years of service to the Society. Elinor received the One-year honorary membership in 1979 and 1985. She is a Master Judge, a Judging School Teacher, Vice Chairman of the Shows & Judges Committee, Judging School Registrar, and Master Judge Recorder. Elinor has also served as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee for many years.

Kathy Bell - 1 year Honorary Membership

Kathy jumped in feet first and never looked back when she volunteered to be AVSA's 2004 Convention Chairman. The convention was a huge success and featured some unique events such as the outdoor banquet. Kathy began growing African violets when she was only ten years old. Her few plants grew into a full-fledged hobby that now includes several hundred plants. In 1991, Kathy joined Tucson AVS and AVSA. She has been TAVS Treasurer, Librarian, Supply Coordinator, Vice President, President, and served as Show Chairman many times. Her experience came in handy as the 2004 AVSA Convention Chairman.

Thelma Heinrich - 1 year Honorary Membership

It's hard to believe that Tucson was only Thelma Heinrich's second AVSA national convention, and she was the Show Chairman! Thelma started growing African violets in the early 90's; her first plant was 'Otoe' which is still in her collection. She joined the San Mateo (CA) club and remained a member until she moved to Arizona in 1996. Thelma has been the show chairman of Desert Sun AVS for many shows. This gave her the confidence she needed to tackle the national show. In addition to African violets, Thelma grows other gesneriads, orchids, and cacti. She is a member of AVSA and an active member of the Desert Sun AVS.

Shirley Berger - 1 year Honorary Membership

Shirley joined AVSA and Lower Bucks County AVS in Pennsylvania in 1982, and Mid-Polk AVS (Florida) in 1988. After six years as a member of the AVSA Booster Fund Committee, she took over the chairmanship from Bill Lyons in 2002. Shirley has served as an AVSA Director and as Chairman of the Committee to Approve the Annual Meeting minutes. She has also donated items for the luncheon auction.

Marlene Buck - 1 year Honorary Membership

For many years, Marlene Buck was very active in the AVS of Philadelphia. She gave programs on design and made every effort to distribute 'Pink Dreams,' a variegated pink blossom *Episcia*. Several years ago, Marlene moved to Arizona and joined the Desert Sun AVS in Phoenix. She continues to amaze people with her beautiful episcias and other unusual gesneriads. Marlene has served AVSA as Chairman of the Boyce Edens Research Fund since 1985. In 1991, she received an Honorary One Year Membership. Marlene has been a member of AVSA for over twenty-five years and is a Life Member.

Winston Goretsky - 1 year Honorary Membership

A native of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, Winston has been a member of AVSA since 1982. He is a Life Member, Senior Judge, and a Judging School Teacher. In 2000, he became an AVSA Director and was installed as President of the AVS of Canada. You cannot look at a copy of the African Violet Magazine without admiring Winston's beautiful photographs. As AVSA's Official Photographer, he spends an entire day during each national show photographing the exhibits, providing selections for publication in the AVM. Winston has served on the Nominating Committee and the Publications Committee.

Vladimir Kalgin - 1 year Honorary Membership

Vladimir Kalgin has added a lot to AVSA and the conventions. He gave an interesting presentation in Tucson and generously donated a Power Point projector to AVSA. He has helped the AVSA Treasury at the Luncheon Auctions with leaves he donated from Russian hybridizers and through his winning bids for plant material to take back to Russia. Vladimir has been described as a "highlight of the luncheon auction." We all enjoy him. He is responsible for inviting and hosting Paul Sorano on his trip to Russia described in the AVM. AVSA memberships in Russia have grown considerably due to Vladimir's involvement. He is an International Life Member of AVSA.

Anne Nicholas - 1 year Honorary Membership

As the AVSA Library Committee Chairman, Anne has worked diligently to update and organize the library. The quantity and quality of programs in the Library has greatly increased under her direction, and she has moved AVSA into the Electronic Age with CDs and DVDs. Thank you, Anne.

Kathryn Paauwe - 1 year Honorary Membership

Kathryn Paauwe is known by many in AVSA. She was a Commercial vendor for many years - Violets by Appointment in West Sayville, NY. In 1999, she and husband, Bill, "retired." Thank goodness, this was not a total retirement! Bill and Kathryn still attend conventions, state and regional shows, and they are involved on many levels. Kathryn and Bill have been putting together the annual AVM Cumulative Index since 1993. It appears in the back of each Jan/Feb issue and is an invaluable resource. Last year Bill received a One year Honorary Membership. He immediately nominated Kathryn saying, "She works just as much as I do. I couldn't do it without Kathryn." The Paauwes are active members of Sweet Water AVS.

Vintage Violets

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A SUCCESS STORY

Thanks to you, the members of AVSA, Vintage Violets has been a huge success. Some of the plants have been on the Wanted List for 8 or 9 years, and then someone reads the article in the AVM and *viola*, that plant has been put back into circulation.

Some of the people looking for a variety want to get all of a certain hybridizer's plants. One wants to collect all of Eyerdom, another wants all of Rob's, and yet another wants every chimera that was introduced. Now I am looking for all of the hybrids by Ethel Champion and Winston Smith's Wrangler series. We can only give it our best to locate them all. Please remember that plants are placed on the Master List only after it has reached 10 years of age. After all, this is the Vintage Violet Committee.

2004 was a banner year for requests. There are twice as many as in 2003. If their growing situation is as crowded as mine, they'll never make it. I think I am the 'King of the Hill' for stacking plants.

Please, let me know when you lose a plant. Sometimes you are the only one growing that plant, and your name is still on file. It is then referred to someone asking for it and guess what, you don't have it!

Does anyone know who Adeline in Texas is? The e-mail address on file is no longer available. Adeline, if you read this, Adeline Krogman has been found. Another grower we are looking for is savannahscarlet@att.net. Sorry, no name was submitted. My question to you is do you still grow 'Lasswell's Girl Friday'? Anita Salix, I need your new e-mail address. Got a message that 'Superman' was for sale on E-bay. Does anyone remember who had it for sale? If you are offering something or need something please include your street address, telephone number, and your complete name. There are a lot of requests that come by snail mail that are answered by snail mail.

'Whisper Blue' by Sorano, has been found. It resides at Travis' Violets. Thanks, Travis, for letting me know.

AVSA Most Wanted

Éclair
Ethel Twiford
Fantastic Florale
Flash Back (by Sorano)
Martha Martha
Ness Chatty Cathy
Niagara's Pink Beacon
Rainbow's Bantam Neon Glo
Rainbow's Fuji Gold
Rainbow's Showboat
Rob's Chimney Sweep
Tribute to Bill
Wrangler's Canyon Echoes
Wrangler's Savage Warrior

First Class Database Update Problem

The company that hosts the web site for the First Class computer program has changed the method of access to the FTP portion of the site, which will cause you to get an error when you try to update the database. Various errors have been reported, but they are all related to inability to access the site. A fix has been posted, and can be accessed at www.firstclass2.com/fix. Follow the instructions on the page, and after you download and install the fix, access will be restored. Note that if you are able to update your database without a problem, you don't need to install this fix.

A Letter to AVSA

from Ethel and Duane (Champ) Champion

We would like to have the AVSA members and board know what our membership has meant to us. We first joined on January 13, 1950, for $3.00. I remember Alma Wright, one of the early leaders, Editor and President. In the 1950s, all women wore hats, and Alma's had large, wide brims – I was so in awe of her. But when you met her face-to-face, she was just a violet friend.

For many years, we attended nearly every convention, and for many of those years, we collected slides of new varieties and created a program that I presented at the luncheon meeting while Champ ran the slide projector. We felt we had to give it up when we were Show Chairmen of the Syracuse AVSA Convention and Show – too many big jobs at once.

Our membership in AVSA has provided us with many other great experiences of which we are very proud. I'm proud to have been a Master Judge for many years, proud to have won the Bronze Medal for hybridizing, and proud to have had a successful shipping business. I am also proud of the recognition I have received for my work with crown variegation, having been asked to become a Director of AVSA, and to have kept my plant, 'Superman' alive for so long. Barbara Elkin often lists some of our originations on the AVSA Most Wanted List.

It was exciting to have been asked to do a workshop at the Washington, DC, AVSA Convention, to talk about 'Superman.' That was very special. We were welcomed and treated royally. I felt like royalty. (If this sounds like a lot of bragging, you are so right – it certainly is.) Now, because of my health problems, 'Superman' has been passed on to Kent and Joyce Stork of Kent's Flowers at the Cincinnati AVSA Convention. They will do a great job. I'll look for it back on the Court of Honor.

When you belong to any organization, you are there to learn and to share your knowledge and experiences. The social aspect is also very important. You meet old friends and make new ones all over the country and the world. Thanks to our membership in the AVSA, we've been able to accomplish all that and more. Our thanks to all of you.

Thoughts While Repotting

by Peggy Madison

Many of you have probably seen several of the articles which have lately appeared in African violet newsletters and magazines on the importance of downsizing your collection when your violet and gesneriad enthusiasm has gotten you into trouble.

I am reminded of this subject often now that I am retired and can spend more time with my plants. With a critical eye, I examine those whose health and beauty are fading, hoping to see what the problems are. Mealy bugs? Mites? The "usual suspects" are not to blame. What a shock to realize that a year has passed since repotting some of those who are barely hanging in there. And when was the last time I did grooming, especially for those I have pushed to the back of the stand in the area now aptly named "The Plant Wasteland"?

Then there are all those little babies struggling to survive, ten to a pot, as I never separated them from their parent plant.

True, I didn't have as much time to take care of the plants when I was working, but the real problem is caused by plant over-population. There are simply too many to give good care to all.

If you want to grow beautiful violets and other gesneriads, you have to give them constant attention. Baby leaves and dead leaves need to be removed, dust needs to be cleaned from leaves with gentle washing. A mild detergent can be used, and then rinsed off.

Neem Oil is excellent for discouraging mildew and polishing leaves. I put 1/2 tsp in a quart of water along with 1/4 tsp liquid dish soap; then I fill a spray bottle, shaking before each use.

Remember, the leaves of your plants should not touch each other. Eliminating plants will make more room, which is a much better solution than running out to buy another plant stand.

Less plants will also mean that you will be able to clean your plant stands easier and discourage pests who thrive on dirt.

Ways to eliminate plants have been discussed many times. They include giving them away to friends, donating, or selling them at plant sales. And, if all else fails, deep-sixing the unhealthy and unattractive ones.

As you downsize, don't be surprised to see that your remaining plants grow better and bigger. After all, you are now able to give them more attention and care which benefits them, and lets you feel less stressed so that you can enjoy your hobby more.

From the Violet Voice

Shows and Judges

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Wow! Penny Wichman and Thelma Miller, along with all their committees and helpers, did a grand job in presenting a fine convention and show. The Commercial members in the sales room offered a wide selection of new plants and supplies. And the show, with over 900 entries, was the largest we have had in several years. Thanks to the consultants, judges, and clerks who worked hard to judge those many exhibits in a professional and timely manner. Most of all, thanks to the exhibitors for the beautiful plants and designs you brought to make sure that "VIOLETS, did indeed, REIGN IN THE QUEEN CITY".

Let's get into discussing some of the questions that came up at this convention. For reasons most of you are aware of, I am running a little behind schedule, so we will address the most important items this time and continue in September with others.

Please make the following addition to your Handbook:

Page 70, under Rules for Container Gardens, please add the following at the end of rule #2. **No bases are allowed in container garden classes and containers may not be placed within other containers. This change is effective immediately.**

A discussion came up concerning assigning titles to container garden classes. Many skilled growers maintain their container gardens for long periods. Please pay close attention to rule #1 on page 70 - **Titles should be carefully worded in schedules so that established container gardens may be adapted to titles appropriate to the theme of the show.**

Question: *If a standard species wins Best-in-Show, would it also be given the award for Best Standard?*

Answer: Yes, anytime a standard African violet wins Best-in -Show, it would automatically be Best Standard if that award is offered in the show.

Again, I will use a little space to say "**THANKS!**" for all the cards, notes, prayers, and phone calls. I am so blessed to have so many dear friends in my life and your loving friendship does, indeed, speed my recovery. I will never forget your kindness.

All Library Requests Must Be Made in Writing to the African Violet Society of America Office

Coming Events

September 10 - PENNSYLVANIA
Pittsburgh Violet and Gesneriad Society Exhibit/Sale
Galleria Mall
1500 Washington Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA
Hours: 10am - 7pm
Info: Georgene Albrecht (724) 693 - 8666
Email: Georgena@verizon.net

Wick Watering

by Dale Martens

I use wick watering because it's easier than watering each plant individually. Wick watering is particularly good for episcias and rhizomatous plants, less so for drought resistant gesneriads such as *Streptocarpus kentaniensis*.

Above is a photo of a couple of reservoirs which I got from Cape Cod Violetry. You may use any plastic tub such as one from margarine or Cool Whip. Cut two holes in the lid, one for the wick and another in which to pour water into the reservoir.

You can see my acrylic yarn wick hanging outside the reservoir onto the table. Normally, that wick is inside the reservoir, but I wanted you to see how long it is. It is made of 4-ply acrylic yarn. Do not, I repeat, do not, use cotton because it will rot away. I cut a length of about 11 to 12 inches for a 4 inch pot, less for smaller pots. Soak it 5 minutes in water. Some people recycle pantyhose as wick material. Cut it around the leg, not lengthwise. Cut about 1/4 to 1/2 an inch wide. You'll have a bunch of circles and you'll cut those open. Then pull on the material to stretch it.

I line my reservoirs with Hefty (green alligator on otherwise red colored box) twist-tie sandwich bags so I don't have to clean the pots, just the lids. I have tried other baggies, but the Hefty brand has fewer leaks and eases around the reservoir better. Put the sandwich baggie into the 2 cup reservoir, add 1-1/2 cups of water. Now, ease the baggie over the edge of the reservoir. Look at the close up of my reservoir to see the baggie stretched around the top. Now, add more water. If you try to ease the baggie over the edge of the reservoir before adding water, you'll just have a lot of air between the baggie and the reservoir. You may use a gallon sized baggie for reservoirs larger than 2 cups.

Take an empty pot and put the wick through the hole in the bottom and hang onto the top of the wick. Have at least 4 to 5 inches of wick hang out the bottom of the pot. Put moist soil into the pot as you are holding the top end of the wick. Add the plant. I wrap the top 2 or 3 inches or so around the top 1/3 of the root ball of the plant. The wick is buried about an inch under the soil at the top of the pot.

The pot and wick need to be moist before the wicking action can begin. Therefore, I put the pot with the wick hanging from under the pot into a saucer of fertilizer water for about 30 minutes. Then put the plant on top of the reservoir and put the wick sticking out of the bottom of the pot into the reservoir of fertilizer water. Check the pot after a week to make sure the wicking action is working.

The soil needs to be a light mix. I use a 1 part AV soil that already has perlite, plus an additional 1 part perlite, 1 part vermiculite, and 1/4 part horticultural charcoal (a lot more than most use, so use less if you'd like). *Streptocarpus* are more tricky to grow this way because they don't like "wet feet". Therefore, they need an even lighter mix than usual...so perhaps add an additional 1/2 part of perlite.

I do not let the reservoir go dry. I add water when it's about 3/4 empty. If your wick dries out, it will not work properly. Do not add water so much that it overflows onto the lid. I tend to do that with 300 reservoirs to fill, so I always put 1/2 inch of perlite in the bottom of my pots. That way if the plant sits in water, the perlite helps prevent root rot.

You must leach salts from the pots at least every 8 to 10 weeks. I pour about 2 cups of clear water (distilled, but tap water is OK) through the pot and let that drain. I do not use Physan in my water to prevent algae. Others do quite successfully. I have a septic system and bleach products are discouraged. So every 8 to 12 weeks I change the sandwich baggie.

You will find that the roots of the plants will grow around the wick and into the reservoir. When I transplant a gesneriad doing this, I repot it with those roots intact on the wick, but cut off the end of the wick without roots attached.

From the Toronto Gesneriad Society *Newsletter*

The Importance of Focused Collecting

~ using your interest in African violets to help preserve unique hybrids ~

by Rich Follett

While there are many African violet enthusiasts who collect plants with one eye towards the future of the available hybrids list, there are many more who make their growing choices based simply on a plant's appearance, bloom color, size, and the opportunity to acquire it. With the number of registered hybrids increasing and the number of African violet enthusiasts *decreasing* in each successive year, it is time for a new kind of collector to emerge – a collector who invests in the *preservation* as well as the enjoyment of hybrids that might otherwise disappear.

The only way to create this new kind of collector is to change the way that we who are now collecting view our own collections and our responsibility to share with and to educate other, newer growers. It is indeed admirable to spread the joy of growing African violets to a new generation of enthusiasts, but along with that joy we must try to impart a firm sense of the importance of stewardship.

Many of the hybridizers who contributed treasured traits have now died or are no longer hybridizing. Without preserving the source of these valued traits, those wishing to hybridize new varieties in the future will always be limited to watered-down versions of the genes needed to achieve a desired result. In addition, the *number* of plants of each hybrid being grown is a factor in the health of the African violet gene pool as a whole. If Mary in Wichita is growing 'Pink Lady' and everyone else checks 'Pink Lady' off their list because they know someone who is growing it, the 'Pink Lady' hybrid remains in danger because one turn of bad luck would wipe out the only existing specimen.

In my own efforts to preserve Rob's hybrid's, I have lost track of the number of times that someone has said to me, "Oh, I have that one – I will send you leaves in the spring", and by spring something has happened to the plant with no other sources being available. If you have an AV that you know is heirloom or rare, *please* make every effort to keep leaves down for rooting at all times and to share freely whenever someone expresses interest. So often, the opportunity does not come a second time!

The act of re-focusing does not require any large, sweeping action on your part; rather, a slight initial shift in your thinking pattern and a series of different day-to-day choices should bring dramatic results even in one growing season. I have made a few simple suggestions below:

1. Look at your AV collection objectively and organize it accordingly. Take a free afternoon and organize all of your plants by size and blossom type. Do you tend to favor standards? Minis? Semi-minis? Trailers? Variegated leaves? Knowing what you are drawn to will help you define who you are as a serious collector.
2. Once you have organized your collection, set any unidentified plants off to the side and concentrate on the named varieties that remain. Do you have a large number of varieties created by one hybridizer – J. Dates wasps, Pittman minis, Hancock variegateds? Narrow down your interests to one or two major categories and find homes for the rest of your plants.
3. Keep your eyes open when you go to shows or as you read the AVSA magazine's Most Wanted List – do you have something in your collection that is hard-to-find or vintage? If so, *let people know you have it* and *propagate it for sharing.*
4. Select one hybridizer in particular and see how many of his/her varieties you can acquire in swaps or at club meetings. The challenge is fun and exciting, and the minimal amount of record keeping involved will encourage you and others to keep track of what is in collections!
5. Look for a hole in the collecting world and fill it if the interest is there for you. I had a wonderful lady write to me recently and tell me that she had been inspired by my Rob's efforts and was going to begin focusing her collection on Pittman varieties. If every serious collector picked one or two hybridizers to focus on, the world of African violet collecting would have many more growing choices for years to come.
6. Let other AV enthusiasts know what you have and share freely. Always make sure that the name of the hybridizer goes to the recipient along with the name of the leaf. Many varieties are sitting on some windowsill somewhere with people looking everywhere simply because the grower knows the name but not the hybridizer.
7. Consider making a modest investment to post your collection on the Internet. The computer is new to many of us, but it is a wonderful tool for sharing information. Many free services offer web-page templates where someone could make a complete list of his or her collection and make necessary changes as plants come and go. It is even possible to choose a .com, .biz, or .net site to register at unheard-of low prices. I recently registered a domain name for exactly this purpose for the modest sum of $4.98 per year for five years! When I finish the web page, this will mean that anyone looking for a hybrid on my list will be able to type the name into any of the on-line search engines and will be directed immediately to my web page. You don't even need to own a computer to do this – you

can create the web page on a library computer or on a friend's computer and have anyone who would like to have more information contact you via U.S. postal mail.

8. Buy and use the First Class software available through AVSA. Apart from being a wonderful piece of software, it has become a standard tool for maintaining and tracking collections. First Class will offer you the opportunity to catalogue your entire collection and to exchange the information in whole or in part with anyone you choose at the push of a button. It is the single most valuable tool I know of for preservation and maintenance of an African violet collection.
9. Keep track of who else is collecting what you like – a discovery by one can mean joy for all, and every new location an endangered violet can be grown in is one more chance for the hybrid to survive.
10. Talk about violets every chance you get! Many people exist on the 'fringes' of the AV community waiting to be drawn back in or perhaps sitting on top of an unknown gold mine of 'lost' varieties on a kitchen window. I visited a ninety-year-old woman recently and discovered two lost 'Rob's' varieties on her kitchen window – varieties I had been searching for actively for more than two years! Your best bet for finding a scarce hybrid may lie with someone who has been growing plants for twenty years or more and who has no idea that anyone would be interested in 'those old violets' on the windowsill.

We all have a growing responsibility to keep track of what is 'out there' and to make a dedicated effort to preserve as much as we can of the tremendous genetic diversity represented in the wealth of African violet hybrids that have been registered over the years. Keep your eyes and ears open, share whatever you can wherever you can, and keep records of what is in your collection. Together, we may be able to ensure that future generations enjoy the same 'African violet rainbow' that we do!

SOIL (LESS) MIXTURE

by Marie Montague

After 35+ years of mixing my family's soil(less) mix (most likely based on a Cornell recipe, but after all these years, who knows) and distributing 100's of copies, a little updating seems appropriate. This recipe consists of two parts of peat to one part each of **coarse** vermiculite and **coarse** perlite. I believe using coarse vermiculite and perlite makes this soil successful. One club member commented that this soil "smells like" her grandmother's soil; perhaps this is because of the charcoal.

OLD RECIPE

8 qts. spaghnum peat (do not use Michigan peat)
screen through 1/4" hardware mesh or pulverize by hand to remove sticks
4 qts. vermiculite (coarse)
(insulation can be used if available and is less expensive)
4 qts. perlite (super course)
4 tbs. dolomite lime (to give a pH of 6.6 to 7)
1 cup charcoal
Mix all of the above thoroughly
Add 2 cups of hot water
Mix thoroughly again

(The above was typed up when peat was purchased by the bale; of course it was cheaper, but you had to search out good suppliers and screen more than once for sticks.)

NEW RECIPE

My supplier sells good quality peat in 8 qt. bags that does not need to be strained for small sticks. He also sells vermiculite and perlite (coarse) in 8 qt. bags, and I find it easier to just double the recipe to avoid measuring for a total of 32 qts. of soil. It stores well in a garbage bag. This goes very quickly when repotting many plants. Of course, the recipe can be cut down to suit one's needs.

16 qts. spaghnum peat
8 qts. vermiculite (coarse)
8 qts. perlite (coarse)
8 tbs. dolomite lime (to give a pH of 6.6 to 7)
Note: haven't tested pH for years, because this recipe has always been in range.
2 cups horticultural charcoal
Mix above thoroughly in strong garbage bag
Add 2 cups of hot water (this eliminates dust)
Mix thoroughly again.

Why bother to make your own soil? This mix appears heavy but water runs through quickly; it's excellent for wicking; there's no dust as there can be with lighter mixes, and you don't have to cover drainage holes unless you are using large pan pots – it stays put. In 35+ years, I have never seen crown rot, ever.

Happy Growing!

Showcase

Cherokee Trail

Exhibited by: **Paul Kroll**
Hybridized by: **L. Ray**
Standard Trailer

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Mac's Black Jack

Exhibited and Hybridized by:
George McDonald

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Mid America

Exhibited by: **Gary S. Mikita**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Streptocarpus 'Salmon Sunset'

Exhibited and Hybridized by:
David Thompson

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

DISCOVERING SEMIMINIATURES

by Kyle Coleman • Seattle, Washington

Entering some of my own semiminiature hybrids in this year's local show brought back memories of when I first discovered the smaller violets. This spring marks the 10th anniversary of the first semiminiature I ever entered in a show. It only took me about 13 years of violet growing (and a challenge) to discover them, but I'm glad I did.

When I first started growing violets, I had been showing and winning with the large standard violets. I always admired the giant monsters in the shows, but I occasionally noticed some smaller plants that were really well-grown. I also noticed a stark difference between the small violets entered in local shows and the ones I would see at the state show. The local ones would have about three to five blooms, but the state beauties would have twenty or more. Both sets would always get lots of ooh's and aah's, but I only understood why at the state shows.

Asking the local violet folks about this observation didn't help either. "They're much harder to grow than standards." "Five blossoms are a lot for a small plant." "They just don't bloom like the big ones." "Only the exceptional ones make it to the state conventions because nobody wants to haul anything ordinary that far for a show." There were many, many reasons given to explain the prolific state winners and the local lack of bloom, but one response at the 2004 local show got under my skin. The local reigning miniature queen and current club president proclaimed, "You'd have to have grown them to understand."

I had to admit that I had never grown a mini or semiminiature. Are they really that difficult to grow? I'd never even thought about it, but I liked the idea of finding out for myself. I decided that I give them a try, but that on the sly so I wouldn't tell anyone in my club – in case it didn't go too well.

In September, I made an appointment to visit a private violet hobbyist living about 45 miles away. She was known at the state level as an excellent grower, so the starter plants would be about the best available. I had noticed that many of the heavy-blooming hybrids at the state show were hybridized by Hortense Pittman, so I selected 15 plants of 12 different semiminiatures by Hortense. I also bought some small pots, downsized reservoirs, and tiny leaf supports – everything I thought I might need. My shopping list also included appropriately-sized grooming tools: small paintbrushes, tweezers, and a pair of fingernail scissors.

Over the winter, I watched the little tykes grow. I kept them disbudded, following the bloom schedules from the AVSA magazine to time the blooms for the 2005 show. I even designed and built a small African drum to enter one of the smaller guys in the unusual container class. (The show theme was "Out of Africa".) It was only after grooming the morning of the April show, did I realize that I'd forgotten one thing: no proportional boxes to pack them in for the trip to the show.

I arrived at the show with all fifteen plants packed in a single layer in a large closed box that had protected a 32-inch TV in a previous life. Many of the other club members were already there and had their plants already out on the tables. A couple came running over to open the door for me, "Do you need some help with your other violets?" "Well no, this is it." The mini-queen quizzed me, "You're only entering one plant this year?"

I sat the box down as everyone crowded around. I opened the box and the room went silent. The violet with the fewest blossoms had 15, while six plants had 50 or more. "I know this is a little different from what I usually grow, but there're still enough plants for an AVSA Collection, a state collection, one unusual container, and eight plants in two of the regular classes."

At the awards presentation at the next club meeting, Madame President presented me with ribbons for Best and 2nd Best of Show, Best Semimini, Best AVSA Collection, Best Variegate, Best State Collection, Best Unusual Container, and a couple of Best in Class. I remembered to thank her, "Thank you for encouraging me to grow the smaller plants – without your encouragement, I would never have realized how easy they are to grow!"

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

The Second Edition of the
Membership & Promotions Newsletter
is available NOW on the AVSA website
at **www.avsa.org/library.asp**

Registration Report

Janice Bruns
1220 Stratford Lane
Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: janice@qwip.net

A name reservation costs $1.00 and is valid for two years, after which time it may be extended two years for an additional $1.00. Registration of the plant is $5.00 unless completed within the reservation period, in which case the balance is then $4.00. Please make check payable to AVSA.

Meredith Hall – Marlin, TX
***Range Gal** (9404) 3/5/05 (M. Hall/B. Foster) Semidouble coral-pink two-tone large frilled star. Dark green, plain, heart-shaped, scalloped/red back. **Standard**

*****

Sue-Zin Lin – Taichung, Taiwan
***Zin's Even** (9405) 3/18/05 (S.Z. Lin) Semidouble chimera dark fuchsia large pansy/white stripe, thin white edge. **Crown variegated** light-medium green and cream, heart-shaped, wavy, scalloped. **Standard**

NAME RESERVATIONS

Meredith Hall – Marlin, TX
* Bandit Boy * Country Lady * Miss Monet * Pink Flutterby * Raging Storm * San-Bar * Western Fantasy * Western Moon * Western Sunrise * Western Sunset *

Heidi Lecompte – Frederick, MD
* Petra's April Love * Petra's Blushin' Prussian * Petra's Fond Memories * Petra's Sweet Expression *

BRAVE HEARTS

by Georgene Albrecht

Members of the Long Island African Violet Society are my heroes. They are determined to overcome an infection of INSV virus. This club is known for growing beautiful plants. So, it was a drastic measure to cancel their show in 2005. They have been very brave in freely discussing and documenting this virus so that we have wonderful documentation to show growers what some of the symptoms were.

Paul Sorano of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses has studied the virus and overcome the thrips that carry it. He helped provide Delores O'Sullivan, Dorothy Vogt, and Fran Bermann testing because he recognized symptoms that resemble virus infection. They went to Cornell University Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center in Riverhead, NY, for diagnosis. Tests revealed INSV in all six plants. Recommendation was made to destroy the plants and dispose of them so thrips would not escape. INSV is carried by thrips. It is also spread by propagation of a virused plant.

So, they planned a strategy. They went from collection to collection trying to select suspicious plants and isolating everything. They are generous people and had shared cuttings and plants freely at meetings. They will be ordering a fresh supply of plants to grow for the 2006 show.

Our editor, Ruth Rumsey, wanted photos of the symptoms, so this club rounded up suspicious plants, got test kits and gathered for a meeting to diagnose and photograph diseased plants so that my article on INSV would have photos. By the way, these test kits are quite delicate and must be used efficiently and exactly as directed. And, remember how many different symptoms this virus presents. How wonderful of everyone concerned to be so selfless.

The club President wrote a wonderful, inspiring "We Shall Succeed" letter for the yearbook. They have provided photos that are priceless education tools.

We want you to know that you are very appreciated. By helping others, they strengthen their resolve, their club, and our society.

How the Ill-Prepared Prepare for Show

by Jim Toms

I thought, "Woe is me!" It was December and I had not even started to get my plants in shape for the May show. This is the usual for me as I am always too busy in the summer and fall to do anything but throw a little water and fertilizer in the direction of the plant stands. I resolved that this year would be different and even had the work table set up, the soil pasteurized, the tools and pots sterilized, etc., in October. My plant room looked like I meant business, but somehow I did not get down to that business until a few days after Christmas, and the show is May 1. Par for the course!

Would I have any show plants? Where there is a will there is a way. Where there is a plant that is not dead there is hope. This article is intended for those of you who have given up in the past and not exhibited plants because you felt that it was too late in the season to start working or felt that your plants were beyond hope. It is not too late if you have almost four months to get them into shape after rehabilitating them. I have just spent a major part of the last seven days rehabilitating 281 plants.

This is a typical tray of my neglected semis and minis with excess, yellowing leaves. Is there any hope for these plants being show plants in four months?

Will I have any show plants? Yes, indeed. Not all 281 will make the grade, but there is a good chance for some, especially the minis and semis that quickly recover from their surgeries and grow fast.

Here is a tray of semis and minis after their rehabilitation. Note that some of them are actually in very good shape. This was not evident 45 minutes earlier.

Here is how I do it. Most of my plants are minis and semis. I take a tray of eight or ten of these plants to the work table. I examine each for pests or diseases. Any that appear to be infested are set aside for more intensive treatment. From the others, I strip off the layers of old outside leaves until all that remains is a crown usually of two or three rows of leaves that still give off an aura of good health. After the leaf-stripping they change in appearance to resemble little palm trees as each now has an elegant trunk topped with a crown of vigorous green leaves.

At this point, I also remove any suckers that I found while stripping the old leaves and also attend to any that have developed multiple crowns. Both are excised with an X-acto knife.

You have all heard how to get rid of that neck. Scrape the neck gently to remove the dry outer tissue and expose the next layer down from which new roots will grow. Various growers suggest using a fingernail or the dull side of a knife blade to do the scraping. I actually use a thumbnail and can't show my right thumb in public for weeks after this activity. It certainly gets stained. I rotate the pot in my left hand while scraping gently down the length of the exposed neck. I press quite gently as I do not want to scrape beyond the tough outer layer, damaging the plant and causing it to go into shock very soon.

In the left frame of this image you can see the plant with most of the excess leaves removed and the neck exposed. In the right frame you can see the neck after it has been gently scraped with a thumbnail to expose the living green tissue under the dead brown tissue. This green tissue is where the desired new roots will originate. You will see this plant repotted in the next photo.

The next step is to judge how much of the rootball to cut off to lower the plant in the pot. I hold the pot so that the rim is exactly at eye level and judge how much higher the top of the neck is than the ideal soil level in the pot. With my small plants, it is typically 1/2 inch at this time of year,

but it can be over an inch. The plant is then gently lifted out of the pot and put on its side on the table. If the leaf span is still considerable as with standards, I place the plant so that the leaves can hang over the edge of the table rather than have them in danger of breaking when I apply pressure to the plant while trimming the rootball.

Now out comes a typical kitchen paring knife (standards get a larger knife) and an amount of rootball equal to the measurement I made with my eyes a moment earlier is removed from the base of the rootball. The screen that goes in all my pots to prevent soil dripping out of the bottom is then reused or replaced if not in good shape. The plant goes in the pot, and I watch that it remains centered as I gently scoop soil in under the leaves until the pot has been filled to the desired level. I pat it down gently so that it is level but not compacted.

Finally, it is off to another table where the plant is watered with lightly fertilized water before rejoining its usual tray-mates in a clean tray. I make sure that the soil is evenly moist from bottom to top by top-watering as well as bottom-watering. I find it necessary to keep the soil evenly moist throughout the pot for anywhere from one month to two months after surgery if my plants are going to develop new roots on their buried necks. I have a success rate of about 100% at getting these roots if I combine light top-watering with bottom-watering during the rooting period. If I water from the bottom only during the rooting period, many of the buried necks do not develop new roots. In all of those 281 plants that I just treated, I found only one that had not developed roots on the neck after the previous repotting.

A winning group of three for the AVSA Collection Class? I wouldn't set my hopes for this threesome that high, but they will be respectable show plants in a few months time. The plant from the previous photos is in front.

This mini with two crowns is slightly more challenging to repair than the other plants. Here enough leaves have been taken off to make way for the "surgeon" to operate.

Above the surgical procedure is complete. Excess leaves litter the table. The more awkwardly placed of the two crowns has been neatly excised but has no roots.

The two crowns are now repotted. The one on the left has been lowered in the pot by burying the neck. It has the original roots and stands a chance of recovering its symmetry by show time. The one on the right is nested rootless in a small bed of starter mix (about 2 teaspoons) in an indentation in the soil. Roots will start easily in this mix and then spread into the soil sparing the grower from potting again. Will it be a show plant? The chances of that are slim, but it should be in shape for the sales table.

Semis and minis are easy to rehabilitate in the time I have left before the show. Standards are not so easy if they have suffered any long term neglect. It takes longer for them to grow out of a flawed condition into the shapely symmetry that a show plant must have. My collection does not emphasize standards, but I still have quite a few.

I hope my ramblings here will encourage some of you who think it is too late to get plants ready for show to rethink things and get busy. This applies as well to members who have never exhibited plants before. Don't be shy. Great show plants can be developed out of rather shabby looking material as long as there is still about four months time available. You will get a better idea of what I consider possible by looking at some of the photos. I have shown you what some of my plants recently looked like before and after their treatment. Yes, those horrors are potential show plants and, if they are similar, yours are too if you get at it right away!

From The Newsletter of
The Lakeshore AVS, Canada

DISEASES OF AFRICAN VIOLETS

From *THE AVSA HANDBOOK FOR GROWERS, EXHIBITORS, AND JUDGES*

CULTURAL DISEASES: In addition to the diseases caused African violets by unfavorable environmental conditions, such as too much or too little water, plants are also susceptible to other problems

Fertilizer salts: An excess of salts from fertilizers, salts that are left behind when water evaporates, can affect foliage and roots.

Signs: Excess fertilizer can cause browning of the leaf tips and margins, wilting and yellowing of foliage, and death of roots. Excessive fertilizer causes foliage to become stunted and brittle.

Control: Control by watching fertilizer rates carefully, and by flushing soil with plain fresh water after every four or five applications of fertilizer.

Leaf scorch: Leaf scorch is caused by burning or scorching of plant tissue. This can happen when plants are taken outside or when African violets are too close to incandescent bulbs or window panes during hot bright weather.

Signs: Leaves are yellowish or have blotches on leaves.

Control: Keep hot, bright sun off leaves. Watch out for hot light bulbs.

Pollution: Pollution or gas in the atmosphere can damage plants or prevent bloom.

Signs: Watch for retarded growth, browning at edges and tips of leaves, speckling, and splotching. Unburned manufactured gas can stop African violets from blooming.

Control: This is difficult in areas of high pollution. Filters in heating and air conditioning systems can help. If you think gas injury is the reason that your African violets aren't blooming, place a young tomato plant among your violets. Tomatoes are very sensitive to gas and the leaves of young tomato plants will bend down completely after a few hours exposure to even dilute concentrations of gas. Have the gas company check your growing area.

Petiole rot: Petiole rot is caused by leaves and petioles coming in contact with salt encrusted pot rims.

Signs: Leaves and petioles rot, wilt, and wither starting at the point where they touch a salt encrusted pot rim.

Control: Avoid over-fertilizing. Remove affected leaves. Flush out excess salts with plain water. Repot the plant in a clean container. Cover rims of pots with aluminum foil. Leaves can also be kept clear of rim by using collar or mounding sphagnum moss under the petioles.

Ringspot: Ringspots are caused under certain conditions by water on foliage.

Signs: Ringspot causes irregular whitish and yellow spots and streaks on upper leaf surfaces.

Control: Keep hot and cold water off foliage, avoid sudden temperature changes, and keep direct sunlight off wet leaves.

PARASITIC AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES: Parasitic and infectious diseases are the result of several microscopic organisms, the more important of which are fungi, bacteria, and viruses.

Fungal diseases: The typical fungus starts as a minute spore which germinates and produces one or more branched threads called hyphae.

Signs: The hyphae grow to form a fungus body which can grow on the surface of a plant (powdery mildew or sooty mold) or completely within the plant (wilt-producing fungi).

Control: Avoid over-watering and crowding. Improve air circulation; install a small fan on a timer.

Botrytis: Botrytis blight, grey-mold blight, or bud rot.

Signs: Disease starts out with a grey mold on blossoms and buds which then turn tan and mushy. It can also involve petioles, leaves, and crown of plant.

Control: Keep humidity down and air circulation up. Avoid over-watering and crowding. Promptly remove all faded or dead plant parts. Control mites which carry Botrytis spores. See chart.

Crown rot: Crown, stem and root rots caused by fungi are widespread.

Signs: Flowers fail to develop properly. Plants wilt, droop, wither, and die (suddenly or slowly). Plant becomes soft, mushy, or dry. The crown, petioles, and roots rot. The plant can easily be lifted off of the pot.

Control: Take cuttings only from healthy plants. Root cuttings and plant violets only in sterilized soil and containers. Avoid over-watering, temperature fluctuations, over-fertilizing, and planting violets too deep. Increase air circulation. Dispose of badly infected plants.

Powdery mildew: This is a fungus disease that appears suddenly, spreads rapidly, and is aggravated by poor ventilation, high humidity, and fluctuating temperatures.

Signs: Watch for grayish-white powder on leaves, stems,and blossoms. Blossoms may be deformed and discolored.

Control: Isolate plant. Dispose of all badly infected plants. Remove all infected leaves and flowers. Increase the space between remaining plants, reduce temperature fluctuations and humidity, improve air circulation, and spray with fungicide.

AVSA HONOR ROLL OF AFRICAN VIOLETS

Floyd Lawson
20917 Madrona Av
Torrance, CA 90503

1990

Boca Grande #5112 (S. Williams)
Emilie Savage #5445 (Eyerdom)
Frances Young #5890 (Pittman)
Hart's Snow White #5590 (A. Hart)
Melodie Kimi #8100 (Sunnyside/Levy)
Ming Blue #5823 (Eyerdom)
Pay Dirt #4988 (P. Tracey)
Wrangler's Jealous Heart #6225 (W. Smith)
Wrangler's Pink Patches #6230 (W. Smith)

1991

Mickey Mouse n/r (Inpijn)
Nortex's Snowfrill Haven #6045 (B. Johnson)
Nortex's Snowkist Haven #6046 (B. Johnson)
Optimara® Hawaii #6558 (Holtkamp)
Precious Pink #6025 (Pittman)
Snow Rose #5985 (Whitaker)

1992

Dancin' Trail #5565 (Sorano)
Falling Snow n/r (Tracey)
Fickle Flirt #6738 (Sorano)

1993

Little Pro #6637 (Pittman)

1994

Optimara® Rose Quartz #6969 (Holtkamp)

1995

There were no 1995 additions to the Honor Roll of African Violets

1996

Tomahawk #7269 (K. Stork)
Irish Flirt #7577 (S. Sorano)

1997

Ode to Beauty #7677 (Cox/B. Johnson)
Picasso #6924 (M. Tremblay)

1998

Ness' Crinkle Blue #8136 (D. Ness)
International n/r (B. Johnson)

1999

Milky Way Trail #7469 (J. Stahl)
Ness' Satin Rose #8144 (D. Ness)

2000

Powwow #7708 (K. Stork)
Rob's Sticky Wicket #6467 (R. Robinson)

2001

Windy Day #7719 (Stork/Boone)

2002

There were no 2002 additions to the Honor Roll of African Violets

2003

Rainbow's Quiet Riot (R. Wasmund)

2004

Frozen in Time #9167 (S. Sorano)
Orchard's Bumble Magnet #8479 R. Wilson

To see the Honor Roll listings from 1960 - 1998, refer to pages 26 & 27 of the May/June 2000 AVM.

To be in the Honor Roll of African Violets, a variety must have appeared in the Best Varieties list for three consecutive years.

(Minor editorial changes have been made on some of the above cultivars for compliance with the current MVL)

BEST VARIETY LIST

There is still time to send your choices for year 2005 Best Varieties

The Honor Roll of African Violets in this issue of the African Violet Magazine is made up of African violets which growers have consistently chosen as their favorites. After a variety appears on the Best Variety List for three consecutive years, it is elevated to the Honor Roll of African Violets.

The Best Variety List, published in our November/December edition is a list made up from the choices AVSA members submitted each year. This Best Variety List is *your* list, those plants which have been the best for *you*.

Here is your opportunity to make your voice heard. Which are your favorites that you would encourage others to buy and grow?

You still have time to submit your, or your club's, List by July 31st, 2005. Every member of AVSA is encouraged to take the time to make a list of up to twenty-five of your favorite plants. You may list fewer, especially if you are a new grower. The list may be sent singly, or as a part of the AVSA affiliate club's summary.

IMPORTANT: If you make only one list for the club, please list every plant voted on and how many votes each received. Also, enclose the total number of members voting, as well as the name of the affiliate club.

The more votes, the better the List. Send your choices now, and then watch the November/December African Violet Magazine for the results.

Send your votes to:
Floyd Lawson
20719 Madrona Ave.
Torrance, CA 90503 U.S.A.
or by e-mail to:
floydll@earthlink.net, by July 31, 2005

Showcase

Fancy Trail

Best Vintage Violet
2005 AVSA National Show
Exhibited by: **Beverly Powers**
Hybridized by: **L. Lyon**
Standard Trailer

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Emerald Love

Exhibited by: **Fern Hildinger**
Hybridized by: **E. Kolb**
Standard

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Mac's Solemn Stillness

Exhibited and Hybridized by: **George McDonald**

Violets Reign in

Bill Price, Laurel Goretsky, Bill Foster, Winston Goretsky, Agatha Garrison

Brad Carnes & Terri Post

Cheryl Salatino & Jack Wilson

Bob Carr, Linda Owens, Jan Carr

Irwin Wagman

Marie Burns & Paul Sorano

Karen Malott

Kurt Jablonski

Heather Borck

Cathy Heider & Arlene Garvens

Carol Semrau, Ruth Bann, Ellen Frilseth

Janet Riemer and Winston Goretsky

Kikuko Matsu, Kazumi Satou, Yoriko Shimizu

Byron Borck, Roger Wheeler, Edna Rourke

Char Boyce & Al Rourke

Andrea Worrell

Harry Weber & Will Loomis

Bill & Kathryn Paauwe

Georgeann Gohr

Jerry & Gary Gordon

the Queen City

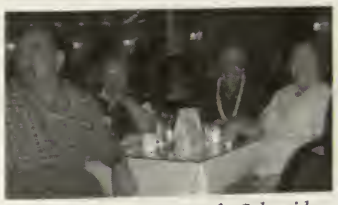
AVSA President
Linda Owens

Tony & Gerry Hulleman

Kim Barr

Charles & Peggy Ridings

Marilyn Wegge



Elmer Godney, Gertrude Schneider,
Bill Price, Jenny Daugereau

Janice Sorenson

Phyllis Enos

Kent & Joyce Stork with King
and Queen Al & Karen Malott

Cooper Via

Susan Allison

Georgene Albrecht &
Pat Hancock

Doris Brownlie &
Olive Ma Robinson

Dan Krieger &
Marcia Belisle

William To,
Gwen Goodship,
Frank Reynolds

Rich Follett

Jo Kirby

Kathy Kennedy &
Linda Miller

Penny Wichman,
Local Convention
Chairman

Tom & Mary Ryan

VIOLET HIBERNATION

by Joyce Stork

Ever have an emergency that required you to leave your violets untended for a long period of time? Or maybe you are running out of room and want to buy more violets but you don't really feel like throwing away any of the varieties you have. Violet hibernation is a way to achieve those goals.

Nancy Horan, a talented member of my local Omaha African Violet Society, has mastered the technique of putting violets into hibernation. She has a large collection of different hybrid African violets (many of which are miniatures and trailers) and a limited growing space. Years ago she came up with a way to package small plants of each variety and to store them for several years before bringing them back out to grow actively again. The plants sit in the package and neither grow larger nor die. They are hibernating!

Nancy prepares the violet for hibernation by transplanting it into a small pot that will fit inside a clear container. She prefers to use Solo brand bathroom cups with a drain hole punched in the bottom. She removes all but a few leaves in the crown to make the plant small enough to fit inside. Each plant is watered well and allowed to soak so that the potting mix has absorbed as much water as possible. Next, she places the plant on paper toweling to draw out all excess water. Finally, she puts it inside the clear container and seals it tightly closed. The packaged violets are then stacked under a fluorescent light unit that is on ten to twelve hours a day in her growing room. She has a mirror placed at the back of the shelf and underneath the plants to enhance the light. She can get up to 195 plants stored under one four foot light unit at a time.

While each person will come up with their own system, Nancy uses recycled clear plastic dessert or sundae glasses that fit tightly together. These can be further secured with tape at the joint. She has also used a clear plastic tall glass and capped it with clear plastic wrap that was held tightly with a rubber band. She stresses that it must be as air tight as is possible. The seal must be able to last for several years. She warns that rubber bands can stiffen and break over a period of a year or two, and ordinary clear tape often deteriorates.

Why does hibernation work? Another member of our club, Paul Evans, teaches horticulture classes at the community college. He explained that photosynthesis uses light to convert carbon dioxide and water into a carbohydrate which the plant then uses as energy to grow (cell division). Water must be present for photosynthesis to work. Stomata are openings on the underside of the leaf which are responsible for controlling the amount of water inside the cells. When a plant is well-hydrated, the stomata release (transpire) moisture into the air. When the plant is dry, the stomata go limp which effectively closes the stomata and protects the plant from further moisture loss. This is the stage where the plant sits temporarily in a suspended state. It does not have enough water to allow photosynthesis to take place, but cells are not quite dry enough to shut down completely and die.

When violets go into hibernation, the violet slows in its ability to produce energy to grow, but it remains alive as long as some humidity remains to keep the cells from shutting down completely. This also happens whenever a violet goes dry for a period of time, but in exposed conditions, the plant moves through the time period of suspended growth quickly and soon begins dying.

Nancy recently repotted and revived violets that she had packaged up over four years ago. She waters them lightly to revive them, then repots them into fresh soil. She reports that there were some roots, but that they were not robust after such a long wait. The violets took off fairly quickly and are now growing just as they had before.

This technique can be applied for shorter time periods by placing plants of any size into clear plastic bags or terrarium – like containers that are sealed tightly closed. It is not difficult to keep violets in bags for up to six months. There is a risk, since fungus can grow quickly in humid closed containers. To avoid a major problem, it is best to use very clean containers or bags and to package each plant individually.

Hibernation is a particularly useful method for saving violets when other more pressing problems pull you away from your collection. Try it! It can be a life saver!

The Evolution of African Violets

by Dr. Jeff Smith

Since most of the species African violets are found in the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania, scientists have long thought that this area was the evolutionary home of African violets. From this locality, the species violets spread to the south (Nguru and Uluguru Mountains), the east (lowlands around Tanga), the north (Teita Hills, Kenya), and north east (lowlands of the Kenya coast) developing into additional species.

However, recent molecular biology studies using DNA have upset this idea. The results of two studies using chloroplast DNA and four studies using nuclear DNA have all reported a different pattern of evolution. The results suggest that African violets are very closely related to streptocarpellas and that the two groups probably shared a recent common ancestor.

The most primitive African violet (closest to the original type) is *Saintpaulia goetzeana* from the southern mountains of Tanzania. The evolution pattern then appears to have spread northward. Four groups of species were consistently found together in the DNA studies. *S. goetzeana* and *S. teitensis* appear to be unique and separate from the other species. The Nguru Mountains are home to a cluster of similar species: *S. nitida* and *S. brevipilosa*. The other species are all very similar to each other at the DNA level and form a cluster collectively referred to as the "*ionantha* complex". This cluster includes all of the species from the Usambara Mountains and the lowland species of Tanzania and Kenya.

From *The Violet Connection*,
Publication of the Ohio State AVS

New Ideas for Club Meetings from the Ventura County AVS

At the last board meeting of the Ventura County AVS, discussion centered on the future of our club.

The members present completed a survey, and a lively discussion of issues followed. The main theme was that the club could not continue as it had in the recent past and needed to change to make the club more fun and less work. Broadly speaking, it was felt that the format and content of the club meetings needed to be changed and then efforts to recruit new members could begin. In this way, the club would be more interesting, fun, and informative to current members, and would be more appealing to new members.

Below are a few of the ideas that were discussed:

- Culture class: This could cover a wide variety of topics to demonstrate basic care of violets.
- Presentations from our librarian: Although everyone seems to know that the club has a library, few people really know what it contains. A short presentation on a featured book or topic might generate interest in using the library. (A list of the library holdings can be found in our club's yearbook.)
- More time for members to socialize with one another.
- More hands-on programs: Many people liked the idea of all club members participating in the program.
- African violet ER: Members could bring their "sick" violets to meetings, learn what is causing the problem and how to "fix" it. Emphasis would be on caring for the plant right then and there.

New ideas regarding shows were also discussed. These included rewording signs so that the violets themselves did not seem to be so fragile (the signs would simply ask people not to disturb the display) and to have a part of the sales area sectioned off for the sale of plants that were in the show, as many people see the beautiful plants in the show and then want to buy them.

From the *Ventura County AVS News*, California

AVSA Booster Fund

Shirley Berger • 4343 Schumacher Rd-196E • Sebring, FL 33872

Contributions: February 1, 2005 – March 31, 2005

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Karen Plourde, Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA. 100.00
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In loving memory of Mary Walbrick
"Happiness Is" AVS, Fort Collins, CO 73.30
Club has disbanded
Sharon E. Johnson, Lino Lakes, MN. 20.00
In memory of Retha Jackson, a special friend
Mary Endrizzi and Sandy Miller, Richfield, MN 30.00
In loving memory of Retha Johnson, founding member of the North Star AV Council
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In memory of Mary Walbrick

Pomona Valley AVS, West Covina, CA $242.48
Club has disbanded
Sandy Officer, Bloomington, MN. . . . 50.00
In memory of Retha Johnson
AV Club of Morris County, Lafayette, NJ 25.00
In memory of Grace Hand, former member
Amethyst AV Club, Saint Charles, MO 10.00
Judy Walton, Allen Park, MI. 5.00
Arnold W. Mueller, Vista, CA 25.00
Peggy Eaton, Brighten, MA 5.00
John B. Warren, Newburgh, NY 25.00
Mary Wagner, Rapid City, SD 5.00
Martin Chabre, Tucson, AZ. 2.00
Walther H. Ott, Bridgewater, NJ 25.00
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Stella A. Richardson, Riverside, CA . . . 5.00
Omaha AVS, Traynor, IA 50.00
In memory of member Marcy Morris

TOTAL $1018.78

Boyce Edens Research Fund

Marlene J. Buck • 17235 N. 106th Avenue • Sun City, AZ 85373-1958

Donations received from February 1, 2005 – March 31, 2005

AVS of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA. $25.00
In memory of Mario Di Puppo
Dolores Harrington, Fridley, MN. . . . 10.00
In memory of Retha Johnson, a AVSA judge and teacher who will be sadly missed
First African Violet Society of Denton, Texas 10.00
Martin S. Wright, Wiliamsville, NY 10.00
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Sue Haffner, Clovis, CA 5.00
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Donalda Ferguson, Montgomery, AL 10.00

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In memory of Paula Foster
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Capital City AVS, Sacramento, CA. . . 25.00
Joan K. Wilson, Theresa, WI. 40.00
In memory of Helen Bartel
Urban & Marilyn Bartel and James & Dolores Ircink, Milwaukee, WI 70.00
In loving memory of Helen Bartel
Robin O'Ferrell, Akron, OH 25.00
Kay C. Schroeder, Clarksburg, MD . . . 10.00
Tustana AVS, Corona del Mar, CA. . . . 10.00
Beverly Volk, Allentown, PA. 5.00
The Tidewater AVS, Norfolk, VA. . . . 25.00
In memory of Anna Weston, our newsletter coordinator for several years

Amethyst AV Club, St. Louis, MO . . . $10.00
North Star AV Council, Anoka, MN . . . 50.00
In loving memory of Retha Johnson
Barbara & Charles Werness, Coon Rapids, MN. 35.00
In loving memory of Retha Johnson
Mrs. Gordon C. Kibbe, Longmeadow, MA 10.00
Phoebe Hahn, Berkeley Heights, NJ . . . 20.00
Ivy Woods, Hamilton, Bermuda 10.00
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Mrs. Edward Hill, Esko, MN. 5.00
Virginia Barthelemy, Tampa, FL 2.00
Richard L. Jarrett, Zelienople, PA 5.00
Frances Carson, Spring Hill, FL. 5.00

AVSA Building Maintenance Fund

Susan Hapner • 35 Ridge Point Dr. • Chesterfield, MO. 63017

Email: hapnersb@aol.com

Donations Received

January 2005

Ventura County AVS, CA. $10.00
Union County Chapter AVS, NJ . . . 25.00
Memory of Grace Hand
Janet Reimer, NJ 25.00
Memory of Mary Walbrick
Amethyst AVC, MO 10.00
Mary Boland, VA. 25.00
Memory of Mary Walbrick
First Austin AV Society, TX 25.00
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In memory of Mary Walbrick
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Diane Esswein, WI 5.00

February 2005

AV Connection – Joan Stout. . . . $150.05
Frances Taylor, Barbara Pershing, Lynda Welchel, Marjorie Bullard, Joyce Myers, Linda Holifield, Wilma Namumnart, Ruth Fitzsimmons
In memory of Mary Walbrick

John Warren, NY. $25.00
Ken Froboese, TX 25.00
Lyn Campo, CT 5.00
Christel Collier, RL. 10.00
In memory of Mary Walbrick
Fred Grafelmann, CA. 25.00
Cecelia Winfield, NJ 5.00
Walther Ott, NJ 25.00
Lucienne Lemieux, Canada 5.50
Victoria Frey, NJ 15.00
Karyn Cichocki, NJ 20.00
Sharon Lynch, NJ 25.00
In lieu of speaker's fee - Robert Kurzynski
Faye Wieditz, KS. 10.00
Eleanor Mattaliano, NJ 10.00
Patricia Castiglione, TX 5.00
Onalee McEwen, TX 5.00
Kathy Norton, CA 25.00
Jill Fischer, NJ 10.00
Sharon Lynch, NJ 25.00
In lieu of speaker's fee - Robert Kurzynski

Corky Reichmann, AK. 5.00
Robin O'Ferrell, OH. 25.00
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Elizabeth Roth, PA 5.00
Kent's Flowers, NB 13.00

March 2005

Phoebe Hahn, NJ. $20.00
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Bryan Lee, NC. 15.00
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Wong Wai Sing, Hong Kong 2.50
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Frances Carson, FL $5.00
Ralph Quaintance, PA. 10.00
Mae Dodson, MD 5.00
Lynn Milgrom, VA. 10.00

Cathy Heider, WI. 25.00
Lynda Vaillancourt, CO 10.00
Joan Wilson, WI 10.00
Stephanie Jeffery, MD 10.00

April 2005

Union County Chapter AVS $25.00
Lieu of judges fee
Village Garden Club 75.00
Lieu of speaker's fee - David Tooker
AV Club of Morris County 10.00
Lieu of speakers fee - Susan Fraley, Kay Rotando
AVS of Staten Island, NY. 10.00
Lieu of speaker's fee - Joe Palagonia
Spring Branch AV Club, TX 15.00
Memory of Paula Foster

TOTAL. $1004.55

Planting by Moon Signs

Moon in Aries

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds, pests, etc., and for cultivating.

Moon in Taurus

Productive and moist, earthy and feminine. Used for planting many crops, particularly potatoes and root crops, and when hardiness is important. Also used for lettuce, cabbage, and similar leafy vegetables.

Moon in Gemini

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for destroying noxious growths, weeds and pests, and for cultivation.

Moon in Cancer

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. This is the most productive sign, used extensively for planting and irrigation.

Moon in Leo

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. This is the most barren sign, used only for killing weeds and for cultivation.

Moon in Virgo

Barren and moist, earthy and feminine. Good for cultivation and destroying weeds and pests.

Moon in Libra

Semi-fruitful and moist, airy and masculine. Used for planting many crops and producing good pulp growth and roots. A very good sign for flowers and vines. Also used for seeding hay, corn fodder, etc.

Moon in Scorpio

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Nearly as productive as Cancer; used for the same purposes. Especially good for vine growth and sturdiness.

Moon in Sagittarius

Barren and dry, fiery and masculine. Used for planting onions, seeding hay, and for cultivation.

Moon in Capricorn

Productive and dry, earthy and feminine. Used for planting potatoes, tubers, etc.

Moon in Aquarius

Barren and dry, airy and masculine. Used for cultivation and destroying noxious growths, weeds, and pests.

Moon in Pisces

Very fruitful and moist, watery and feminine. Used along with Cancer and Scorpio, especially good for root growth.

July Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Fri.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
2 Sat. 4:26 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
3 Sun.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
4 Mon.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
5 Tues. 3:07 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
6 Wed.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	New	8:02 am
7 Thu. 3:11 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
8 Fri.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
9 Sat.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
10 Sun. 3:57 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
11 Mon.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
12 Tue. 4:09 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
13 Wed.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
14 Thu.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	2nd	11:20 am
15 Fri. 1:51 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
16 Sat.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	
17 Sun. 7:35 am	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
18 Mon.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
19 Tue. 9:26 am	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
20 Wed.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
21 Thu. 8:55 am	Aquarius	Air	Barren	Full	7:00 am
22 Fri.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	3rd	
23 Sat. 8:12 am	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
24 Sun.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
25 Mon. 9:23 am	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd	
26 Tue.	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd	
27 Wed. 1:54 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	11:19 pm
28 Thu.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	4th	
29 Fri. 10:02 pm	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
30 Sat.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
31 Sun.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	

August Moon Table

Date	Sign	Element	Nature	Phase	
1 Mon. 8:52 am	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
2 Tue.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
3 Wed. 9:10 pm	Leo	Fire	Barren	4th	
4 Thu.	Leo	Fire	Barren	New	11:05 pm
5 Fri.	Leo	Fire	Barren	1st	
6 Sat. 9:54 am	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
7 Sun.	Virgo	Earth	Barren	1st	
8 Mon. 10:08 pm	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
9 Tue.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
10 Wed.	Libra	Air	Semi-fruitful	1st	
11 Thu. 8:35 am	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	1st	
12 Fri.	Scorpio	Water	Fruitful	2nd	10:38 pm
13 Sat. 3:47 pm	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
14 Sun.	Sagittarius	Fire	Barren	2nd	
15 Mon. 7:13 pm	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
16 Tue.	Capricorn	Earth	Semi-fruitful	2nd	
17 Wed. 7:39 pm	Aquarius	Air	Barren	2nd	
18 Thu.	Aquarius	Air	Barren	2nd	
19 Fri. 6:52	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	Full	1:53 pm
20 Sat.	Pisces	Water	Fruitful	3rd	
21 Sun. 7:01 pm	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd	
22 Mon.	Aries	Fire	Barren	3rd	
23 Tue. 9:58 pm	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
24 Wed.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
25 Thu.	Taurus	Earth	Semi-fruitful	3rd	
26 Fri. 4:43 am	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	11:18 am
27 Sat.	Gemini	Air	Barren	4th	
28 Sun. 2:57 pm	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
29 Mon.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
30 Tue.	Cancer	Water	Fruitful	4th	
31 Wed. 3:14 am	Leo	Fire	Barren	4th	

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CYCLAMEN MITE, *Steneotarsonemus pallidus*

by Dr. Charles Cole

The cyclamen mite is the most devastating mite attacking African violets. Its ability to increase numbers rapidly, its detrimental effects upon the plant, and the difficulty in controlling this mite make it the most feared of all violet pests.

The cyclamen mite is found throughout the world. It was first reported in the U.S. in 1898 (in New York) and in Canada in 1908. At the present time, it is distributed throughout the U.S. The increase and spread of the cyclamen mite has been facilitated by the increased popularity of foliage plants and the resultant movement of plant materials throughout the continent.

Description and Identification

The cyclamen mite is about 1/100 of an inch long when full grown. It is almost impossible to detect without the aid of magnification.

Cyclamen mite eggs, although microscopic in size, are relatively large, being 1/2 the size of the adult itself. The eggs are oval in shape, glossy white, and are unmarked. Immature mites are milk-white in color and are shiny in appearance. The pupae are white in color and are inactive. Adult mites are oval in shape and are amber to tan in color. They are somewhat translucent, and they glisten as if wet or oily.

Life Cycle and Habits

Cyclamen mites develop most rapidly at a temperature of 16 degrees C (60.8 degrees F) and at a humidity of 80-90 percent. Their eggs hatch in three to seven days, depending upon temperature. The immature or larval stage feeds on plant tissue for one to four days before molting to the pupal stage. Pupae develop and molt to the adult stage in two to seven days. A complete life cycle may be completed in one to three weeks. There are reports of the life cycle taking as long as seven weeks under colder conditions. Female cyclamen mites live for about one month. They lay from one to three eggs per day and may produce more than 100 eggs during their lifetime.

The improvement of the environment provided by a home or greenhouse enables cyclamen mites to multiply and develop year-round. Natural populations, exposed to the environment, overwinter as adults. The adults begin to lay eggs in the spring. A peak in population usually occurs in June or July. In greenhouses very heavy populations often occur in the fall.

Cyclamen mites avoid light. They seek out the protected area of the plant crown or folds in the leaf where it joins the petiole. Varieties with ruffled or quilted foliage provide more protection and may be susceptible to higher mite populations.

Cyclamen mites have a very wide host plant range. They readily attack many species of plants used as shrubs or house plants. A number of the most common plants attacked by cyclamen mites are:

African violet, Begonia, Chrysanthemum, Cyclamen, Dahlia, Delphinium, Geranium, Gerbera, Ivy, Larkspur, Petunia, Pikake, Snapdragon, Strawberry and Watercress.

Damage

African violets attacked by cyclamen mites exhibit specific characteristics. These characteristics are generally evident long before the mite itself can be found. Damage occurs when mites insert their sucking type mouthparts into tissue and remove plant sap. During the feeding process, mites inject a toxic chemical into the plant. This chemical disrupts the normal growth pattern of the plant.

Symptoms of Infestation

Light infestations may cause blasting (the shedding of small flower buds). Leaves may twist, curl, and become brittle. Flower buds may fail to open and, if they do open, they may be undersized, deformed, or have the colors streaked.

Heavy infestations can result in the death of leaf and flower buds. Leaflets may appear excessively hairy and may soon die. The terminal of the plant may appear "fuzzy" and then may be killed. If heavy infestations are neglected, they can kill the plant, or at least the center of the plant.

After infestations have been controlled, plants may continue to exhibit certain symptoms for a considerable length of time. These include the twisting and curling of leaves, undersized blooms, and the streaking of the colors of the flowers. These symptoms are an expression of one or both of two different phenomena. First, this may be the result of growth - distorting chemicals which have been injected into the plant by mites.

Second, in the case where the plant terminal has been destroyed, the symptoms result from a hormonal imbalance from the loss of auxin (a hormone found in young growing tissue). The destruction of auxin results in the production of ethylene. Ethylene, in turn, causes epinasty or leafcurling.

Plants will fully recover from cyclamen mite damage in time. After proper pruning of deformed growth, plants will appear perfectly normal.

Infestation and Spread

Considering the wide host range, it is impossible to isolate your plants and yourself from any possible contact with these mites for any length of time. More than likely, our plants are exposed to mites periodically. However, most of the time conditions are not favorable for the mites, and they either die off or they continue to exist in very low numbers until conditions are optimum. Then, there is a population

explosion, and mites begin to produce symptoms on our plants which we can detect.

How do our plants contract mites? Although mites are mobile, they do not move very far and are most often transferred from plant to plant by direct contact. Under heavy infestations mites can spread rather rapidly through a culture by simple random movement across benches and tables. As cyclamen mites are so small as to go undetected by the human eye, they can get a free ride from plant to plant, bench to bench, or greenhouse to greenhouse on human hands, tools, pots, other equipment, clothing, and sometimes on the fur of our pets.

Prevention and Cultural Control

Infestations may often be avoided by close inspection of all plants prior to purchase. The isolation of all newly acquired plants for a period of time is an added precaution against spreading mites. The normal sanitary practices of culturing violets, such as the removal of spent and damaged plants, the use of clean equipment, and the frequent inspection of plants also aid in preventing the introduction and spread of mites.

Plants within a culture should be inspected frequently for mites and symptoms of mite damage, especially suspect plants. Examine the blooms, buds, plant terminal (where petiole connects to crown), and the junction of the leaf blade with the petiole. These are favorite habitats for mites. Any plant with an abnormal growth pattern such as twisting petioles or curling leaves should be given special attention.

It is not necessary to destroy a rare plant or to refrain from purchasing a plant needed for your collection because it is suspected as having a mite infestation. A grower should not panic when mites are found in a culture. Cyclamen mites can be controlled. We must familiarize ourselves with proper control techniques and with the early symptoms of mite infestations. Then we can obtain and maintain control of the pest.

Heat may be used to control cyclamen mites. All stages can be killed with heat. For effective control, immerse infested plants with pot and soil, for fifteen minutes in water held precisely at 110 degrees F (43 degrees C). A heat chamber saturated with water vapor may also be used effectively. Expose infested plants in a heat chamber at 110 degrees F (43 degrees C) for two hours.

Chemical Control

A number of acaricides are labeled by the EPA for the use of controlling mites on African violets. Certain compounds require multiple applications at four to five day intervals to get control. Control may be achieved with only one application of certain other compounds.

When using an acaricide, it should be applied as soon as an infestation is detected. Any delay increases the possibility of damage dramatically. Disbudding enhances control considerably, as mites often hide within a bud, and the acaricide does not come into contact with them. Due to the habits of mites, thorough coverage is necessary if control is to be achieved. Special attention should be given to the crown of the plant and to the junction of the leafblade and petiole. If a few mites are left untreated, resurgence of the population may occur.

From *Insect and Mite pests of African Violets*

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Application for Membership Recommended by _____ **Mem. #** _____
The African Violet Society of America, Inc.
2375 North Street, Beaumont, TX 77702 **Date** _____

Membership runs one year from date paid and includes 6 issues of the AFRICAN VIOLET Magazine.

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- ❑ Affiliated Chapter USA ($27.00)
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Consistency

by Cheryl Salatino

Growing African violets can pose quite a challenge for even the most experienced grower. In New England our four seasons alone guarantee we're in for constant change - and some 'un-seasonal' weather fluctuations.

As a new grower, we quickly learn that a little tender loving care of our African violets can yield great reward. The trouble usually comes when the collection increases and conditions change.

Consistency is the hidden secret - the missing ingredient. Often, environment works against consistency unless you work hard to maintain it. Take a thorough look at your growing conditions and determine the time and routine care you are able to provide. You found the ideal growing area for your first few African violets. Now that the collection has grown, your growing area has probably expanded or moved. You must carefully examine the existing conditions to determine if and when you achieve **ideal conditions.**

As you know, there are many factors that contribute to healthy plants. Start with these key elements to determine if consistency is contributing to your plant concerns.

Light. The optimal amount of light needed to grow healthy, blooming plants is typically 12 to 14 hours a day under florescent tubes. That requirement may be slightly reduced if using wide spectrum or special grow lights.

Depending upon where your plant stands are located, natural daylight can be an added factor. As the angle of the sun changes during each season, the amount of natural light will vary. You may need to make modifications in the artificial light to accommodate for any light fluctuation. Of course, each plant also has unique light requirements, so watch its growth patterns to see if the placement on the shelf is ideal. Stronger light intensity occurs at the center of a florescent tube and the light weakens towards the ends.

Temperature. African violets like similar living conditions as most people - temperatures around 70 degrees. Winters and summers really pose a problem with maintaining comfortable temps (at an affordable price). Consider alternatives in the growing area to minimize dramatic seasonal changes. Fans, cloth or plastic shelf covers, and heaters are just some of the options available to alter conditions. Be creative. And, don't forget to assess the amount of humidity available during the seasons. African violets thrive in a wide range from 40% to 70%. If you're comfortable, it's likely the plants will be too. If it's too dry, try capillary mats, a humidifier, or add pebbles and water to the bottom of the trays. Remember, extremes in either of these areas can have a negative effect on growth and blooming.

Water. Constant moisture is recommended for African violets - not too dry and not too wet. Drown and drought conditions are a quick way to introduce problems and demonstrate a break in the culture of a plant. Remember, the temperature of the water also plays a role here. Tepid water is preferred. Often we leave water containers out overnight to allow chlorine to dissipate. During the cooler months, check to see if water in those containers has become too cold for the plants. Cold water can produce leaf spotting, curling of foliage, and slow down root and plant growth.

Once you've mastered the fundamental growing consistencies, take a look at the routine care you are able to give to your collection. Consistency in all areas of plant care really makes a difference.

From *Ye Bay Stater*, publication of the Bay State AVS

Soap Recipe

by Betty Smith

This mixture can be used for thrips, black flies, etc. and is great for many problems that can harm your African violets.

- To Make Solution:

  Mix together in pint jar:

  1 cup oil (Wesson or Crisco)

  1 T. Ivory dishwashing liquid

- To Use

  When ready to spray on plants, put 2 tsp. of above mixture into 1 cup water. Mist the plant on both sides of leaves, but do not get the crown soaking wet. If solution gets onto blooms, it could cause spotting.

From the Newsletter of the Tucson AVS

THE PROBLEM OF AFRICAN VIOLET MUTATION

by Gwen Goodship

This problem has been with us for many years. At first it was welcomed when the crossing of the species gave us the first hybrids that went on to mutate to the early double flowered plants and then to the colors different to the species colors. But in recent years mutation, or the term 'sporting', has appeared to be more prolific during propagation from leaves.

It is disappointing when plantlets grown from a leaf of a favorite *Saintpaulia* do not bloom the same as the mother plant. It may be that the blooms are multicolor instead of being solidly one color, or even the opposite way around. It is even more disappointing when on second or third blooming of the original plant there is a color change. I have had that happen, and it means that the mother plant has sported and to some degree is unstable. Nothing can be done about it but either to let the mother plant grow on, hoping that the changes go away or take another leaf for propagation from the plantlets and see if the changes remain the same. And that is done only if the sport is well worth the growing. There is also the possibility that the leaf form could change as well.

Sometimes the sport will continue to sport again and again on leaf propagation. When the sporting gets to this stage, a serious grower (one who grows the plants for entries in a Show) will give up on it and throw the plants away. Oh, I know that to some that is sacrilege, but why waste time, space and effort in growing a *Saintpaulia* like that!

Past experience of mutating saintpaulias have made me decide not to grow those with multicolor or fantasy blooms if I can help it. There have been few of these types of saintpaulias that I have grown that have given me stable color plants and that is why my preference is for varieties having single solid colored blooms. The only exception to this are those varieties with the very thin white geneva edge.

I know that there are some people who delight in being surprised at what color blooms their propagated plants produce but that is not for me. I want to get what I expect to get from a plant.

May I remind those who exhibit their sporting varieties that they should always label them as "Sport of ...." and if the sport appears to be stable and they give it a name, it should be labeled ". . . . . Sport of.....". That is only fair if the leaves or plants are handed on to others.

How would you go about proving a hybrid stable? Well, it takes a great deal of time and effort.

The African Violet Society of America (AVSA) is the international registration body for saintpaulias, and they have regulations for the registering of a new hybrid. It has to have been proved to be truly stable on multiple vegetative propagation; in other words, it must still conform in every way to the original description of that hybrid after a minimum of three generations of leaf propagation.

Most commercial hybridizers grow and propagate a new hybrid for several years before putting it on the market. This is to ensure it is stable and especially if they want it to have an AVSA registered number behind its name. This length of time also probably covers the possibility of a mutation coming sometime in later leaf propagation which could cause a problem.

If you would like to prove the stability of one of your own hybrids, here is a rough outline plan to follow when you have selected THE ONE from your seed growing:

1) Make a very detailed description of the plant, listing the type of bloom and its color or colors, the type of leaf and its color, and also note its diameter size for standard, semiminiature, miniature, and also if it is a trailer. Photographs are also very useful here for later comparison.

2) Take two or three leaves for propagation from this original plant and grow all resulting plantlets to blooming. Keep records as to which leaf produced which plantlet. In other words, from now on you need a program of numbering.

3) Discard any of the plants that do not conform to the original description exactly. (I know that is likely to be hard, but it must be done). Take leaves for propagation from those plants that do conform and grow them on to blooming.

4) Check these plants carefully, assuring that they still conform exactly to that original plant and once again take leaves from them for propagation, growing on to blooming again.

5) The plantlets from these leaves will be the third vegetative generation, and if their blooming plants conform exactly to that original plant from seed, then you are likely to have a stable variety. To make really sure, you could repeat the process some more.

As you probably agree, following this program will take many, many months, but to finally get a stable variety that could become an AVSA registered hybrid *Saintpaulia* is quite worthwhile.

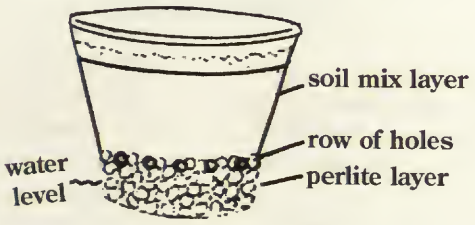
Also, along the way, it is possible that one or two of the non-conformers to the original hybrid might be attractive enough that you want to keep them. In which case you might consider carrying out the whole process for them. But do be prepared to dump the whole lot unless any of them are really something special.

There is one other point to consider before you begin: have you enough growing space needed for the program? If you have not adequate space - forget the whole idea!

From the publication of the
The Saintpaulia & Houseplant Society, England

REPOTTING STANDARD AFRICAN VIOLETS

by Kerry Knight



Before you start to re-pot, it is advisable to have your plant on the slightly dry side rather than wet. You will find that it is much easier to work on. Try to re-pot twice a year. Leaving your plant in the same pot for too long can retard it's growth.

I never decide on the size of the pot that I am going to use, until I remove the plant from its pot and examine the size of the root ball. This, I find, is a good idea because you can also check to see if your roots are healthy and if there are no pests present. Sometimes it is very easy to see, by the roots protruding through the drainage holes in the pot that the plant will require a pot the next size up.

Do not fall into the trap of thinking that if you repot your plant into a large pot you won't have to repot as often. A plant that has a lot of potting mix around the root system can develop root rot. It is more beneficial for the plant to be potted up just one size and have enough room for the roots to develop. It is less likely to develop root rot.

When re-potting a large plant, you may have to remove some of the outer leaves, leaving a neck on the plant. Gently scrape the neck to remove the calloused marks. The plant will then have to be lowered in the pot to cover the neck. This generally means removing part of the root ball. When a plant is fully mature, it should be approximately three times the size of the pot.

Sometimes the root system may not have developed enough to warrant the plant being potted up. If this is the case, a general tidy up of the plant and a clean, same size pot, or sometimes a size smaller pot, along with fresh potting mix, will generally encourage the plant to grow better.

When a plant is growing well and has only been repotted in the last few months, you can move into a pot one size larger, by taking an empty pot the size that your plant is growing in and placing it inside the larger pot. Fill the gap between the two pots with damp potting mix. Carefully remove the plant from its old pot and place it gently into the cavity.

Texas Potting (see diagram) - the nutrient solution in the saucer is drawn up to the root system by capillary attraction. The air spaces between particles, including the perlite layer, or particles in the potting mix, form capillaries thus drawing up the nutrient.

From the Newsletter of
The Early Morn AV Group Australia

Adjusting the Advice

by Brenda Stride • From African Violet & Gesneriad News

At a recent Toronto show, our good friend Monte Watler experienced first hand a new hobbyist's reaction when responding to the query, "How often should I feed my African violet?"

Monte explained the continuous feed method to this perspective gesneriad addict by stating that one should add a quarter teaspoon of fertilizer to a gallon of water, then water the plant and repeat this method with each watering. "All of that for one plant!" was the startled response from the individual, "I'll drown my plant!" It appeared that what would seem like a standard reply by our affable associate was not quite understood by this potentially new client. Monte quickly realized that a few more words were necessary to accurately explain the continuous feed method. A gallon of water was not what was necessary to water the one African violet plant with each time, but was the required amount in which to dilute the fertilizer. The new hobbyist was then informed to just give the plant what is required to nurture it on to its best. Most hobbyists are used to using up gallons of water for their many plants and so talk in gallons. They find it almost impossible to fathom that someone could only have one or two plants to look after. Monte questioned himself later on how many plant deaths he might have unwittingly caused having given his "quarter teaspoon of fertilizer to one gallon of water" explanation many times.

It would surprise not a few people to learn that I am very comfortable with sharing what I know only because I have heard it so often that I sound like I should know what I am talking about. The truth, however, if it were to be discovered, is that I can put into practice next to nothing when it concerns the culture and care of the gesneriad family of plants. I leave that part to my husband. I just ask the questions!

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

Kohleria 'Monte's Friendship'

Best Other Gesneriad in Show

2005 AVSA National Show

Exhibited by: **Dale Martens**

"And the winners are ..."

Mary J. Corondan
7205 Dillon Court
Plano, TX 75024

AVS OF GREATER TULSA, OK – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Silent Prayer, Stolen Dream, Gauteng Lizzy; Best Standard: Gauteng Lizzy, **Edna McCawley.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Love Bite, Rob's Squeeze Toy, Rob's Rinky Dink; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Sassy Shirley; Best Miniature: Rob's Rinky Dink; Best Trailer: Milky Way Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Janus', **Judy Carter.** Best Design, **Pat Sutton.** Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Fern Hildinger.** Design Sweepstakes, **Jeanne Cotton.**

CENTRAL FLORIDA AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Tiger, Buckeye Icebreaker, Rebel's Beauty; Best in Show/Best Standard: Tiger, Best Semiminiature: Sassy Sister; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Elvie Blakely.** Best Miniature: Rob's Jitterbug; Best Trailer: Rob's Humpty Doo; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Lauretta McElwain.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia ionantha*; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Falling Star', **Betsy Zaoriski.**

CORPUS CHRISTI AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Midnight Sky, Rebel's Restless Heart, Rebel's Blueberry Ice; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Shy Blue, Dean's Cupid, Rob's Cool Fruit; Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Majorie Bullard.** Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Funny Bunny, **Judy Majek.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Iced Pink Flamingo', **Andrew Maceda.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Sarah Stensland.**

DALLAS METRO TRIO AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Midnight Mauve, Blackie Bryant, Suncoast Lavender Silk; Best in Show/Best Standard: Suncoast Lavender Silk, **William Sugg.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Favorite Child, Brazos Stormy Skies, Ness' Candy Pink, **Richard Nicholas.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Texas Space Dust, Gleeful Elf, Honey Blue Ace; Best Semiminiature: Red Bandito; Best Miniature: Honey Blue Ace, **Ray Pittman.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Red Bandito, Cool Blue, Teen Thunder; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Hortense Pittman.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola,* **Meredith Hall.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Iced Pink Flamingo'; Best Design, **Bill Foster.** Design Sweepstakes, **Blanca Fuster.**

DELAWARE AVS, DE – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Whoa Nellie, Rob's Slap Happy, Rob's Little Pueblo; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Barb Borleske.** Best in Show/Best Trailer: Pixie Blue, **Libby Behnke.** Best Semiminiature: Little Pro, **Bobbie LaFashia.** Best Species: *Saintpaulia rupicola,* **Ron Bannister.** Best Gesneriad: *Dalbergeria* sanguinea; Best Design, **Terry Celano.** Design Sweepstakes, **Carol Callaghan.**

DESERT SUN AVS, AZ – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Irish Flirt, Sassy Sister, Optimara Little Ottawa; Best Semiminiature: Tomboy Blue; Best Miniature: Lollipop; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Thelma Heinrich.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Grandmother's Halo'; Best Trailer: Pixie Blue; Best Species: *Saintpaulia magungensis* var. *minima*, Best Gesneriad: *Koellikeria erinoides*; Best Design, **Marlene Buck.** Design Sweepstakes, **Dariane Joshlin.**

FANTASY AVC, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rain Man, Rebel's Splatter Kake, Ode to Beauty; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Dust Storm, Pink Playmate, Irish Flirt; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rain Man; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Dust Storm; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Party Girl', **Thad Scaggs.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Picasso, Anna Kreeck, Ness' Viking Maiden, **Trudy Duerstock.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Sassy Sister, Ness' Crinkle Blue, Teen Thunder; Best Design, **Anna Horvath.**

FIRST AUSTIN AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Wrangler's El Diablo, Harbor Blue, Ness' Candy Pink; Best Standard: Wrangler's El Diablo, **Nancy Reuter.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Spring Peach, Rob's Jitterbug, Persian Prince; Best in Show: Spring Peach; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Penny Smith-Kerker.** Second Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Willawong, Rob's Vanilla Trail, Rob's Boolaroo; Best Trailer: Lyon's Pinky Wink, **Susan Robison.** Best Design, **Delores Gibbs.** Design Sweepstakes, **Pat Freeman.**

FIRST LAKELAND AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Clementine, Fisherman's Paradise, Ness' Candy Pink, **Marvin Nester.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Windy Day, Pink Obsession, Mindi Brooke; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Precious Pink, Optimara Little Ottawa, Thunder Surprise; Best in Show/Best Standard: Mindi Brooke; Best Species: *Saintpaulia diplotricha* Punter #7; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Eryth Hendershot.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Boondoggle, Texas Teen; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boogie Woogie; Best Miniature: Rob's June Bug, **Christel Collier.** Best Trailer: Princess Trail, **Shirley Berger.** Best Gesneriad: *Cobananthus calochlamys*, **Kelly Ates.** Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Jane DiLorenzo.**

LAKES AREA VIOLET GROWERS, MN – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Blaze Spinner, Optimara Trinidad, Ness' Viking Maiden; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Angel Babe, Rob's Smarty Pants, Frosted Denim; Best in Show/Best Standard: Rebel's Blaze Spinner, **Ken Rein.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fiddle Faddle, Lollipop Kid, Rob's Whodunit; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fiddle Faddle; Best Miniature: Blue Blazes; *Chirita sinensis*; Best Design, **Kathy Lahti.** Best Trailer: Foxwood Trail; Best Species: *Saintpaulia velutina* lite; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Jude Neumann.**

MOONLIGHT AVS, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Sunlit Sugar Plum, B-Man's Irish Red, B-Man's Alessio; Best in Show/Best Standard: Sunlit Sugar Plum, **Chris Caroche.** Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fiddle Faddle; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Janus'; Design Sweepstakes, **Cheryl Johnston.** Best Miniature: Munchkin Kisses; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mural Fort.** Best Design, **Bonnie Harris.**

OAKVILLE AVS, ONTARIO, CANADA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rainbow's Fourth Dimension, Granger's Wonderland, Harbor Blue; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Toy Castle, Optimara Rose Quartz, Optimara Little Crystal; Best in Show/Best Standard: Granger's Wonderland; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* House of Amani; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Eva Linstol.** Best Trailer: Ramblin' Dots, **Sharon Deuling.**

SPRING BRANCH AVC, TX – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Apache Friendship, Kiwi Dazzler, Rebel's Splatter Kake; Best Standard: Rebel's Splatter Kake, **Elaine Click.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Doohickey, Rob's Rinky Dink, Orchard's Wonder Twin; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Orchard's Wonder Twin; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Ruth Goeke.** Best Semiminiature/Best Trailer: Rob's Boolaroo, **Jane Rexilius.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Leslie'; Design Sweepstakes, **Vickie Crider.**

SUNDOWNERS' AVS, LA – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Tiger, Lela Marie, Marie Knoblock; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Fuzzy Navel, Rob's Boogie Woogie, Rob's Hand Puppet; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boogie Woogie; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Trailer/Best Species: *Saintpaulia orbicularis* var. *purpurea*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Martha Dyson.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Soiree, Rodeo Country, Optimara Crater Lake, **Lois Holmes.** 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Berry Shake, Thunder Surprise, Ness' Crinkle Blue, **Donna McClellan.** Best in Show/Best Standard: Kiss Me Love, **George Ramirez.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpella*; Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Elmer Godeny.**

TAMPA AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Fisherman's Paradise, Painted Sunrise, Wrangler's Dixie Celebration, **Mina Menish.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Tiger, Lyon's Pink Crystal, Frosted Whisper; 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Ness' Cranberry Swirl, Ness' Crinkle Blue, Ness' Satin Rose; Best Miniature: Mickey Mouse; Best Gesneriad: *Episcia* 'Karlyn'; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Nancy Kast.** Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Rob's Miriwinni, Milky Way Trail, Rob's Lilli Pilli, **Jay Sespico.** Best Semiminiature: Dean's Lavender Blue, **Jerry Kast.** Best Trailer: Rob's Gundaroo, **Jay Sespico.** Best Design; Design Sweepstakes, **Mary Lou Harden.**

TUCSON AVS, AZ - Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: *Saintpaulia grandifolia #299, Saintpaulia tongwensis, Saintpaulia grandifolia #237*; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Boo Man, Rob's Hot Chocolate, Rob's Bahama Mama; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Bed Bug; Best Species: *Saintpaulia grandifolia #237*; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Allen Reith.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rhapsodie Cora, Optimara Monet, Rhapsodie Rosalie; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Miriwinni, **Doris Morris.** Best Standard: Ness' Blueberry Kiss, **Esther Hopkins.** Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Susie', **Cindy Baker.** Best Design, **Betty Smith.** Design Sweepstakes, **Sharon Hill.**

UNION COUNTY CHAPTER, AVS, NJ – Winners: Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Irish Flirt, Rob's Heat Wave, Rob's Boondoggle; Best in Show/Best Miniature: Mickey Mouse; Best Standard: Ness' Bangle Blue; Best Semiminiature: Rob's Boondoggle; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Muriel Lawrence.** Best Gesneriad: *Chirita longgangensis*, **Gail Gray.** Best Design, **Chris Brenner.** Design Sweepstakes, **Janet Riemer.**

UPPER PINELLAS AVS, FL – Winners: Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Optimara EverGrace, Suncoast Lavender Silk; Best in Show/Best Standard: Suncoast Lavender Silk, **Mary Helen Maran.** 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Kiwi Dazzler, Ma's Debutante, Ann; Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Tiptop, Little Pro, Rob's Pink Satin; Best Miniature: Pink Puff; Best Semiminiature: Mac's Luxurious Leisure; Best Species: *Saintpaulia* House of Amani; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Priscilla'; Best Design; Horticulture Sweepstakes; Design Sweepstakes, **Phyllis King.** Best Trailer: Dresden Doll, **Glenn Shelton.**

Design

Photo Credit: **Winston J. Goretsky**

"Go Bengals"

Best Design in Show

Best Interpretative Flower Arrangement

2005 AVSA National Show

Designed by: **Olive Ma Robinson**

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

"The Heart of the City"

Second Best Design in Show
Best Container Garden
Best Dish Garden
2005 AVSA National Show
Designed by: **Linda Golubski**

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

"Arnoff Center for the Performing Arts"

Third Best Design in Show
Best Interpretive Plant Arrangement
2005 AVSA National Show
Designed by: **Mary Jo Bradley**

AVSA Gives Special Award

by Joyce Stork

A Special Award was presented to Mr. Leung Tai-han at the 59th Annual AVSA Convention in Cincinnati recognizing his substantial contributions and dedication to the Hong Kong African Violet Association and the African violet world.

The Honorable Mr. Leung is now more than 90 years old and has led the HKAVA as president for 23 years since he helped to found the group in 1981. The association under his leadership has become one of the best known and well-established horticultural groups in Hong Kong, having participated in every Hong Kong Flower Show, an annual event in the province which draws 500,000 people over 10 days. Mr. Leung has been the chief judge of African violets at the show for twenty-one years.

Because of Mr. Leung's enthusiasm, the government has also co-organized African violet shows for 10 years that attract over 50,000 people each year! Mr. Leung has regularly appeared on television and in other broadcasting media over the past 20 years and was officially appointed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to teach classes on the proper way to grow violets. He is the face of African violets in Hong Kong!

The Hong Kong African Violet Association has grown from about 20 members in 1981 to about 300 today. The group has an executive committee that organizes activities for the group that will help them to understand how to grow violets more successfully. Mr. Leung leads the group to the current system of study groups for new members, with six bi-monthly meetings a year of the entire group. He also was the driving force behind the development of a web-site and a bi-monthly newsletter.

Mr. Leung, who has many ties to the United States, actively seeks out new varieties of violets and other plants which he generously shares with his club members. He is greatly esteemed by all of the executive committee for his leadership.

AVSA is grateful for Mr. Leung's dedication to African violets and was pleased to honor him with a special award.

Multiple Crowns

by Carolee Carter

from the AVSA Website "Frequently Asked Questions"

Many novice growers of African violets do not understand that, with the exception of trailing varieties, African violets are single crowned plants. The beginnings of new plants - or suckers - emerge between the petioles at the neck of the plant, and the growers allow them to remain. While this will not destroy the plant, it will destroy the natural symmetry of the single-crowned plant. It will also diminish the amount of blossoms that the plant will produce because most of its energy is being directed to supporting the number of plants in the pot. As a result only a few blooms will appear on each of the crowns.

Therefore, it is advised that when you see a sucker emerging, you immediately take it off by using the end of a pencil or tweezers (which are used to prevent damage to surrounding leaves). If, however, the suckers have gotten out of control, you need to take the plant out of the pot. Then, by using an instrument such as a nut picker, gently try to pry the additional plants from the sides of the mother plant. Once this is done, you then can repot the mother plant and the "babies" into a moist potting mix.

The baby plant will not have a root system, so put it in a very small pot (a bathroom plastic Solo cup does nicely here) and then place the entire pot in a small plastic bag, seal it, and keep it in a warm (not hot) area. You can keep it in the sealed bag for several weeks until the roots form – making sure that the bag does not fill with too much condensation from the greenhouse you have created. Once the roots have formed, then you can remove it from the bag.

African Violet Tips

I purchase plastic canvas from a craft store to line the bottom of my plastic trays. This can be cut to fit. I bought the 12 1/2" X 22 1/2" size, white #5 or #7 mesh. This eliminates pots from tipping over on the corrugated bottoms of the plastic trays. Water flows through nicely. These sheets are relatively inexpensive. I found them at a discount store for less than one dollar, and at a craft store for a little more. Even smaller sizes are available.

Another suggestion: I buy quantities of 5 oz. Styrofoam® coffee cups at my local supermarket, which are great for leaves and starter plants. Holes are easily poked in the Styrofoam, and it takes permanent marker ink well. Many will fit into a growing tray. These are also less expensive than Solo® cups, which I previously used.

Joan M. Kitko
Florida

If you're like I am, you're always rooting a leaf and ending up with more violets than you can accommodate. Yet, you feel a responsibility towards those little living things and can't bring yourself to discard them. Why not put them up for adoption? I've found the Salvation Army is always willing to accept African violets, even baby plants too young to bloom, for their Seniors' programs and hospital visits. Hospitals, convalescent centers, and retirement homes, all places in need of a little cheer, are always happy to get a healthy plant. They usually suggest that you drop them off at the main desk in the reception area. Happy sharing!

Frank Martin
Washington

When rooting violet leaves, if you have a large leaf but only a small space for it, you can reduce the leaf by several means and still be successful with rooting and plantlet production. You can remove the top 1/4 or 1/3 of the leaf (or can trim it around the edges), or you can actually create a new petiole by cutting along the center vein up from the bottom of the leaf and following a secondary vein and out to the leaf edge. If you haven't tried this, experiment with a leaf some time.

Old leaves are not the best choice for rooting. You can tell if a leaf is old - if you are not sure of its origin, if you see damage spots from where it has rubbed on a pot rim. Older leaves also tend to have pale petioles, while younger leaves show more color.

Sue Haffner
CA Council News
California

Hints for coping with summer temperatures:

- Water on a regular basis. Your violets may dry out more quickly in the summer, so they should be checked once a week.
- Violets prefer to have air circulating around them, so placing a small fan blowing near, but not directly on them, is beneficial.
- Keep small containers of water near your plants to increase the amount of available humidity.
- Keep grooming your plants during the summer. A small sucker in July might be a second crown by September!
- Be consistent. Maintain the regimen you and your plants are used to.

Ruth Grieco
Ye Bay Stater
Massachusetts

The new product, Glad Press N Seal® wrap, works wonders as covers on containers, working better than the actual covers that come with the containers, as more light is able to filter through.

Sharon Corton
Ye Bay Stater
Massachusetts

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IN MEMORY

Vera Price

AVS of Minnesota has lost a longstanding Honorary Lifetime Member. Vera Price died March 15, 2005, at age 105. She was an active member since the early 1950s when the Minnesota society was first formed. She grew lovely violets right up until 1994, when she moved from the Twin Cities to Bemidji, MN, to live with her daughter. Vera was also an active member of AVSA. Her daughter recalls that she attended many conventions and once gave the invocation at the national convention in Vancouver. Though physically incapacitated in recent years, she remained mentally alert. One of her "claims to fame" was that her vote in the 2004 election maintained her record of casting a ballot in every presidential election since 1920 when women's suffrage took effect, a total of 22 times. She was a responsible citizen and member of society until her death.

Rosaline Tsukie Fujimori

Rosaline Tsukie Fujimori passed away March 13, 2005. She was a long time member of the AVS of Hawaii and had been historian and hostess of the club for many years. Rosaline warmly greeted new people at their first meeting. She was very generous with the club and members. She is sorely missed.

"Summerizing" Your Plants

It's no secret that African violets are not particularly fond of the warm temperatures associated with summer. Blossoms diminish in count and size, and those that are produced just don't seem to last as long as they do when temperatures are cooler.

Here are a few helpful hints that may make your plants a bit more comfortable:

Ceiling Fans: Most ceiling fans are two-directional. During warm temperatures, switching your ceiling fans to draw air from below (where the cooler air exists) will keep your plants more comfortable.

Morning Misting: When it gets particularly warm, a morning and a mid-afternoon misting will keep the surface temperature of the leaves cooler, which will prevent heat-related damage.

Also, adjust/reduce light hours and reduce fertilizer. Do keep a watchful eye out for powdery mildew and thrips. Summer daytime/nighttime temperatures fluctuate considerably, which encourages mildew to grow. Our homes are left more "open" in summer, which is a "welcome mat" for thrips.

From the Newsletter of the Early Morn AV Group

PROPAGATING TRAILERS FROM LEAVES

by Marge Huntley

I have found that leaves quickly produce new plants if the following method is used.

Initially leaves are not removed from the stem. A portion of stem is cut from the plant. If the leaves are opposite -cut the stem about a half inch long on each side of the leaf pair. Then with a blade, slice the stem from top to bottom giving you two leaves each with a portion of stem. These are then planted in African violet mix, either like a mallet cutting or like a regular cutting. A number can be put into the same small pot. I planted 6 *Columnea* leaves, and six weeks later five of them had little plants.

If leaves are not opposite - all the better. No need to slit the stem. Each leaf can be planted with a portion of intact stem. HOW DOES IT WORK? It must be that the growing point in the leaf axil is not destroyed as would happen if you just took the leaf off the stem while still on the plant. I used to plant leaves of everything only to find that the leaves of some genera rooted all right, but only very occasionally produced plants.

From The Newsletter of the Early Morn AV Group

It was Reigning Violets in Cincinnati!

by Richard Follett

The 59th AVSA Convention and Show "Violets Reign in the Queen City" at the Drawbridge Inn in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky (Greater Cincinnati) April 17 – 24 was truly a wonderland for African violet and gesneriad lovers. The Drawbridge Inn is a labyrinthine complex with a Tudor décor that made a beautiful setting for the plants we all know and love. The Inn had a lovely display of no-name African violets in the lobby to greet conventioneers, and the staff was extremely helpful and attentive to our group's often unusual needs: questions like "do you have a vacuum to lend?" or "do you know where I can get a sharpie marker?" and "do you have any two-ounce solo cups?" were never too much of a challenge at all hours of the day or night.

Kazuo Horikoshi, Richard Follett, Susumu Shizukawa in the Sales Room

The presentations were first-rate. I attended Dr. Jeff Smith's program on "Sports and Mutants – in Search of a Queen" and was stopped dead in my tracks by the magnificent slides and the valuable knowledge he shared with everyone present. It is truly a gift to African violet enthusiasts everywhere to have such a dedicated and experienced scientist to guide us toward successful hybridization and the future of saintpaulias. I also attended two presentations on African violets in other countries: Kazuo Horikoshi's "African violets in Japan" and Gwen Goodship's program on African violets in Great Britain. Both were excellent, and each speaker brought many 'goodies' to share with delighted audience members whose names were drawn to go up and select a prize. There were so many treasures to be had that almost no one left the room empty-handed. I was lucky twice in a row, receiving a lovely book on Japanese African violets at Kazuo's program and, later, a coveted leaf of the British hybrid African violet 'Chiffon Vesper.' I had no idea before I attended these programs that such marvelous hybridizing was going on in either of these countries. Kazuo has produced some wonderful chimeras (the Japanese are very fond of chimeras), and British hybridizer Joan Hill has produced an entire series of glorious standards under the 'Chiffon' prefix. I was also surprised to learn that growing conditions in both Japan and England have been far more challenging than ours here in the U.S.A. due to a lack of air conditioning in the summer and central heating in winter. Only recently have conditions in these two countries begun to approach what we have here. Perhaps we have not realized how lucky we are!

One of the highlights of the convention for me was Gary and Pat Dunlap's "Hands-on Propagation" workshop. I went to see how a commercial vendor propagates African violets on a large scale, but I had no idea just how much I would learn! Propagation from seed, leaf, sucker, bloom stalk, and even tissue culturing was covered in a detailed and entertaining manner over the course of an hour – in the end, we were told we had to 'wrap it up' to make way for the next program, and Gary and Pat kept right on answering questions as they walked down the hall!

An excellent program on Preserving African violet species in Tanzania and 'ex situ' (off site) was offered; here, participants could purchase a tissue-cloned species violet growing in agar in a test tube! The problems of disappearing habitat in Tanzania and mishandling of existing populations of species violets are threatening the genetic bank for all of the hybrids we now enjoy and all those yet to come – it is imperative that we African violet lovers support preservation efforts in any way that we can. The Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden has a program to cryogenically preserve and store Saintpaulia tissue samples for future generations. The slides and the talk were impressive and unforgettable.

Speaking of unforgettable, the show and the sales room were just magnificent. There were more than nine hundred entries in the show, and the adjoining sales room had beautiful plants and all of our favorite supplies on an infinite variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. I stocked up on small pots, light stand trays, potting mix, and plant labels. What a great chance to sidestep shipping charges! It was just breathtaking to walk from the sales room into the showroom – the layout of the Drawbridge Inn allowed for them to be side by side so a person could get inspired by something in the showroom and go immediately to pur-

chase a starter plant or supplies next door. It was heaven!

The Riverboat cruise on Friday night was just perfect – 119 of us occupied an entire floor of the riverboat and enjoyed a delicious buffet, spectacular views along the Ohio River, and music from a DJ who played a nice mix through dinner and perfect music for dancing afterwards. And oh, how we danced! Who knew that African violet people were such party animals?

There were three color-coordinated couples from the local senior prom sharing our dining room on the riverboat – I can only imagine what they thought when they walked in and saw all of the 'Violet people!' They were good sports, however, and settled right in for dinner and, later, some line dances and 'twist and shout' maneuvers.

The Opening dinner, auction luncheon, and Installation banquet all featured delicious food, marvelous company, and honors for the best and brightest. I was delighted by the ambience and the chance to mingle with the "AV glitterati." The auction was a tremendous success for AVSA and generated much-needed funding for operating expenses and special needs. The items ranged from practical to exotic to breathtaking, and there was something for every taste and price range. Behind the scenes, a piece of African violet history changed hands; Linda Rowe brought Ethel Champion's fifty-three year-old original plant of "Superman" to live with Joyce Stork, who has agreed to be its steward for the next fifty-three or so years of its life. Ethel's trips to her famous basement are not as frequent as they once were, and she had entrusted Linda to bring "Superman" to Joyce. It was a very emotional and uplifting moment, and I felt honored to be present to witness history being made.

I was delighted to see some old friends and to meet some new friends face-to-face for the first time – with all of the African violet chatter taking place on the Internet these days, I have corresponded with some folks for years without ever having met them! I also got to see some of my Japanese friends again. As a Fulbright Memorial Fund scholar, I traveled to Japan in November and December of 2004 and was graciously entertained by Kazuo Horikoshi and members of the Japan African violet Society, who squired me all over Tokyo and took me to the best African violet shop in Japan, on the top floor of the Keio Department Store at Shinjuku Station. I did not know when I left Japan if I would ever see my friends again, but thanks to the AVSA convention we spent three wonderful days together.

Because of my project to preserve Rob's hybrids, I have been corresponding with Gwen Goodship for more than a year; I was thrilled to meet her and delighted to learn that she is just as charming as the chatty letters she sends me from 'across the pond.' She and fellow (England) African violet and Houseplant Society member William To have agreed to help me track down some elusive African violets in the U.K.. Regarding the Rob's project, I had tremendous success at the convention! I was given leaves of 'Rob's Pal Paul' by Beverley Williams of Canada; a plant of 'Rob's Quixotic Lad' by a mystery friend who left it at Rob's display for me; a plant of 'Rob's Candy Apple' by my friend Susumu, who brought it all the way from Japan; a plant of 'Rob's Mister Sneezy' by Barbara Elkin; leaves of 'Rob's Jee Jim' by Rob himself, and I found a lovely 'Rob's Magnetic Field' among the plants offered at David Thompson's booth. What a joy! I will be so happy when I can share these plants with the long list of people who have e-mailed me to ask for them.

There was so much to see and do in such a short time – the whole experience was pure magic. The main attractions, though, were the beautiful African violets and the wonderful people who grow them. The more I travel in the African violet world, the more I realize that 'Violet people' are truly the BEST people. I met kind smiles and great conversation everywhere I went, and came home with memories to last a lifetime. I also came home with a far greater number of new African violets than I have room for – but that is another story entirely. Uff da - See you in Minneapolis in '06!

African Violet Basics

by Nancy Robitaille • From African Violet and Gesneriad News

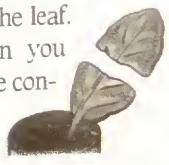
Always take a leaf from the second or third row or leaves when propagating African violets. Why? The center leaves are too young and immature and beyond the third row of leaves, the leaves become weak and may not produce babies. Leaves from the second row, possibly the third row, are mature, vigorous, and more likely to produce healthy babies in less time.

Take the leaf and cut with sharp knife at a 45 degree angle. This cut allows more of the stem to be in contact with the soil and will produce more babies.

Prepare a 2 1/2 inch pot or other small container. Place good African-violet soil in it. Water the soil. With a pencil, make a hole, and then place the leaf stem in the soil.

Plant leaf at an angle. A name tag may be placed inside the pot to record information.

Sometimes leaves grow roots then start to grow larger themselves rather than making babies. In order to keep them from doing this, cut the top part off the leaf.



You may write any information you wish to keep on tape or directly on the container. Include plant's name, hybridizer, date of planting, or other information.

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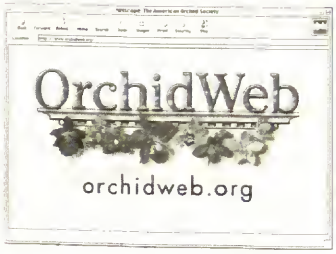

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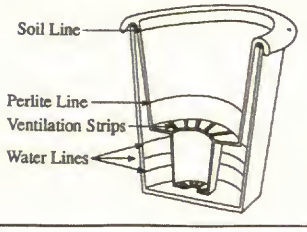

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